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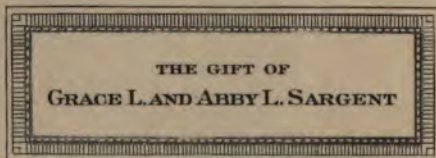
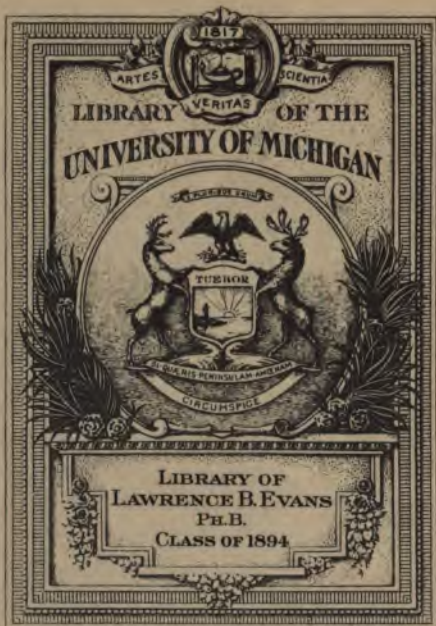
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THE
AMERICAN REVOLUTION

PART I. 1766—1776

BY THE RIGHT HON.

SIR GEORGE OTTO TREVELYAN, BART.,

AUTHOR OF

“LIFE AND LETTERS OF LORD MACAULAY,”

ETC. ETC.

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THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.

CHAPTER VI.

THE GENERAL ELECTION OF 1774. THE WINTER SESSION.

WHILE the House of Commons was scheming the ruin of Boston its own days were already being numbered; and those who speculated on the exact date of its disappearance had a very narrow margin within which their calculations could range. Charles Fox experienced the fortune which frequently awaited him where money was to be lost or won. He laid Sir George Macartney ten guineas to five that the Dissolution would not take place before Christmas 1774; and on the last day of September sixty messengers passed through one single turnpike in a hurry to inform the country that the writs were being prepared for immediate issue.

When dealing with so long and so eventful a national history as ours it is never safe to speak in superlatives; but it may confidently be asserted that the burden of proof rests with those who maintain that a worse Parlia-

ment ever sate than that which was elected in the spring of 1768. Chosen amidst an orgy of corruption, its title to remembrance rests on two performances. By a great and sustained exertion of misdirected energy it succeeded in depriving the Middlesex electors of their rights for half-a-dozen sessions; and it threw away the loyalty of America. One good deed stands to its account. In a better moment, inspired by the inflexible integrity of George Grenville, it had enacted a law framed in the interest of electoral morality with sincere intention, and not a little skill. The trial of an election petition, which had hitherto been determined by a party vote in a Committee of the whole House, was now transferred to a small number of selected members, who were bound to listen to the whole evidence, and decide the case according to its rights. The proceeding became henceforward something of a judicial reality, instead of a mere opportunity for the people in power to increase their existing majority by substituting a friend in the place of an opponent. Great things were expected from the new Act by honest men of all political opinions. Samuel Johnson congratulated the electors of Great Britain on the circumstance that a claim to a seat in Parliament would now be examined with the same scrupulousness and solemnity as any other title. Under the old state of things, (so he most truly said,) to have friends in a borough was of little use to a candidate

* *The Patriot, Addressed to the Electors of Great Britain, 1774.*

unless he had friends in the House of Commons; and a man became a member because he was chosen, not by his constituents, but by his fellow-senators. The case could not be more pithily stated; but it reads oddly in a pamphlet issued on behalf of a Cabinet which, by the brute force of partisan votes within the walls of Parliament, thrice unseated Wilkes, and ended by seating Luttrell.

These symptoms of nascent purity were not equally acceptable in a higher quarter. The King understood the inner working of his own system of government better than did the downright old Tory author who had taken up the cudgels to defend it. Little as George the Third loved Grenville when alive, he had still less liking for the well-meant and carefully devised statute which that statesman had left behind him as a legacy to his country. The Commons voted by more than two to one in favour of making the Act perpetual. No one argued against the proposal on its merits except Rigby who, with a touch of genuine feeling, implored the House to think twice before it forbade treating. But the King next morning expressed to Lord North his regret that Parliament had been misled by a false love of popularity, and consoled himself with the reflection that passion was a short madness.

Grenville's law had very seriously altered, for a time at all events, the conditions under which his Majesty practised the art wherein he was a master. The first dissolution which takes place under a new Corrupt

Practices Act is always a season of perturbation among those more humble operators who now pull the hidden strings of politics; and the King and his coadjutors, in the autumn of 1774, hesitated about doing many things which they had done fearlessly at the general election of 1768 and which, after the manner of their craft, they had learned how to do safely before the general election of 1780.* But, even in those early days, wherever they were on firm ground, they acted broadly, promptly and decisively. Parliament had made it dangerous to bribe the electors in the boroughs; but nothing, except the limits of that Secret Service Fund which had been extracted from the taxpayer on the pretext that it was to be expended in securing the general interests of the nation abroad and at home, stood in their way when it was a question of bribing the patrons. "A note," (such were Lord North's orders to Mr. John Robinson, the Secretary of the Treasury,) "should be written to Lord Falmouth in my name, and put into safe hands. His Lordship must be told in as polite terms as possible that I hope he will permit me to recommend to three

* The King and Rigby were not alone in their dislike of the Grenville Act, as is indicated in Samuel Foote's play of *The Cozeners*. The piece was published in 1778; but it had been put upon the stage in 1774.

"*Mrs. Fleec'em.* Have you advertised a seat to be sold?

"*Flaw.* I never neglect business, you know; but the perpetuating of this damned Bribery Act has thrown such a rub in our way.

"*Mrs. Fleec'em.* New acts, like new brooms, make a little *bustle at first* But the dirt will return, never fear."

of his six seats in Cornwall. The terms he expects are 2500*l.* a seat, to which I am ready to agree:" and he had still to agree when his noble friend, rather shabbily (as he complained) made it guineas instead of pounds. "Mr. Legge," wrote the Prime Minister on the sixth of October, "can only afford 400*l.* If he comes in for Lostwithiel he will cost the public 2000 guineas. Gascoign should have the refusal of Tregony if he will pay 1000*l.*, but I do not see why we should bring him in cheaper than any other servant of the Crown. If he will not pay, he must give way to Mr. Best or Mr. Peachy." Six weeks afterwards, when the goods had all been delivered and the bills were coming in, some of the bargains had not yet been finally closed. "Let Cooper know whether you promised Masterman 2500*l.* or 3000*l.* for each of Lord Edgcumbe's seats. I was going to pay him twelve thousand five hundred pounds, but he demanded fifteen thousand."*

These delectable details had for George the Third the same fascination as the numbers and discipline of his soldiers had for Frederic the Great, and their height for Frederic's father. Determined to get his information from the fountain-head, if that phrase can be applied to such very muddy water, he wrote direct for news, and more news, to Mr. John Robinson, whose assiduity in keeping him informed of what was going forward, (so he graciously acknowledged,) he could not

* *Abergavenny MSS.*: published by the Historical Manuscripts Commission, 1887.

enough commend. He sent three letters to Lord North, in the course of five days, about the poll for Aldermen in the City of London, regarding it as an indication of the probable action which the Liverymen would take at the poll for their parliamentary members. He was careful to remind the Prime Minister of a report, which had reached his ears, that bad votes were being tendered for the opposition candidates at Westminster; and he gave personal orders that his household troops, horse and foot, should be canvassed on behalf of Lord Percy and Lord Thomas Clinton, who were standing in the Government interest. In one electoral department, more important then than now, he had a free hand, and he let its weight be felt. The mode of choosing Scottish representative peers was not affected by the Grenville Act; and the King arranged the list as summarily as though he were nominating as many Lords in Waiting. His method of management called forth on the present occasion a letter in refreshing contrast to the waste of sycophancy and greediness by which it is surrounded. Lord Buchan informed Dartmouth, as the only Minister with whom he cared to communicate on a friendly footing, that Lord Suffolk, writing as Secretary of State, had thought proper to send him an authoritative message on the subject of the sixteen peers to be elected for Scotland. "I returned his Lordship an answer suitable to the affront he had ventured to offer; and I do most earnestly intreat your Lordship, *as an old acquaintance*, and a person for whom I have

a singular good will, that you will when an opportunity offers suggest that, if I am to be applied to for the future in that manner by any of the King's servants I shall, notwithstanding my disposition to rustication, make one more visit to the great city to chastise the person who shall waste his ink and paper in that manner."*

The consequences of the Grenville Act were not as sudden nor as sweeping as Rigby apprehended. It may have seemed a dry election to those who, between their twinges of gout, recollected the flood of liquor which six years before had inundated the constituencies. But there was as yet no lack of the rough conviviality which long ere this had driven Horace Walpole from Parliament. It was a bad time for a member of the Dilettanti Club who at that period of the year did not care to leave London, and the great country houses round London, for any point short of Italy; especially if his political interests required him to travel almost as far as Italy in exactly the opposite direction. John Crawford the younger of Auchinanes,—whose gratitude (as has already been related) Charles Fox acquired by coming chivalrously to the rescue when he was involved in rhetorical difficulties,**—has left a record of what he went through in order to re-enter a House of Commons where he was afraid to speak, and did not greatly care to sit. No one can read without compassion, and few politicians without a pang of sympathy,

* *Dartmouth MSS.*: vol. III.: page 211.

** *Early History of Charles Fox*, chapter X.

the letters which he addressed to those members of the Fitzpatrick connection the necessities of whose canvass took them no further afield than the Home Counties. It had been serious enough when, between one election and another, he had been doing no more than nurse his popularity, and attempt painfully to acquire in North British circles the reputation of a good fellow. "I have at this moment," he wrote to Lord Ossory, "three neighbours who are come to dine with me. I dine at four, and they came at one, and I am now making them my mortal enemies by not going down to them. I had yesterday likewise three gentlemen to dine, whom I wished most to be well with; but I have heard that they were dissatisfied with me for not giving them wine enough. My wine is the best, I suppose, in the world: my clarets of vintage fifty-nine; my Port, Sherry, Madeira, sweet wines, some of it forty years old, and scarce any less than twenty." It is no wonder that, when the Renfrewshire election came in earnest, the owner of this cellar was paying his penalty in bodily suffering for the glory of such a possession. "This is a small county, and whenever I get upon my feet, I shall be able to go through it in a few days. The Duke of Hamilton has given me his interest, which is very considerable. You may guess how I pass my time between the gout, and the country gentlemen who come flocking in upon me. I have passed two cruel nights; violent pain, abominable company, and no sleep. Yesterday *my antagonist* came to see me. There were eight be-

sides myself, who only appeared for half an hour. They sat from three to ten o'clock, and I had the curiosity to enquire from the butler what they drank. You can calculate better than I can, so divide ten bottles of wine, and sixteen bowls of punch, each of which would hold four bottles. Can you conceive anything more beastly or more insupportable?"*

Meanwhile the leading member of Crawford's circle would have been well pleased to light upon a seat where the process of electioneering consisted in making himself agreeable to a duke, and drinking a sufficiency of fifty-nine claret with commoners. The purchase of boroughs was a cash transaction, and therefore outside the sphere of Charles Fox's financial operations; and the few which could be obtained as a favour were not for him. The most confiding of patrons would hesitate before he sacrificed a couple of thousand pounds for the honour of making a senator of a young gentleman

* Letters in the Russell collection, from Crawford to Lord Ossory; September, 1774. The *locus classicus* which determines what our ancestors regarded as an inadequate provision of liquor for a party of three may be found in a letter written to George Selwyn by a fast parson. "The whim took them of ordering their dinner, and a very good one they had: mackerel, a delicate neck of veal, a piece of Hamborough beef, cabbage and salad, and a gooseberry tart. When they had drunk the bottle of white wine, and of port, which accompanied the dinner, and after that the only double bottle of claret that I had left, I found in an old corner one of the two bottles of Burgundy which I took from your cellar when you gave me the key of it. By Jove, how they did abuse my modesty that instead of two I did not take two dozen! But, having no more, we closed with a pint of Dantzic cherry-brandy, and have just parted in a tolerable state of insensibility to the ills of human life."

whose shortcomings were historical, and whose public virtues might well be regarded as of too recent origin to stand the strain of a six years Parliament. Fox, said Walpole, like the Ghost in Hamlet, shifted to many quarters; but in most the cock crew, and he walked off. At last he found an asylum at Malmesbury, a delightful constituency with thirteen electors. It is possible that his success was the result of a compromise between the two parties; for his colleague was Mr. William Strahan, as estimable a man as supported the Government, which as King's Printer he could not very well help doing. To satisfy the current requirements of the Malmesbury burgesses he possessed that which Charles Fox wanted; for he had long been in a position to lay by a thousand pounds a year from the profits of his business.

The arrangement suited Strahan; for he was not one of those who carried public differences into personal relations. His two closest intimacies were with two men who had not a political view in common. He had done more than anybody else to help Samuel Johnson through his period of distress; and in later and happier days he acted as his banker, and such a banker as any literary man would rejoice to have. He found places for young people whom the great writer desired to assist, and franked his letters; and did his best to enable him to frank them himself by recommending him to the Secretary for the Treasury as a parliamentary candidate, on the ground that the King's friends would

find him a lamb, and the King's enemies a lion. On the other hand Strahan came as near as the ordinary duration of human existence would allow to being a lifelong friend of Franklin, whom in 1757 he already regarded as the most agreeable of men, and the most desirable of associates in the calling to which they had both been bred. In 1784, when even Franklin was too old for the offer of a partnership in a printing office, Strahan was still urging him to come as a guest to England, and to stay there for good and all. What Franklin thought of Strahan may be gathered from the fact that he forgave him his votes in favour of North's policy; a forgiveness which he conveyed in a letter of grim, and for him rather heavy-handed raillery.* Charles Fox had every reason to be satisfied, for he had secured what in those facile days passed for an ideal parliamentary situation;—the membership for a borough represented by two gentlemen of opposite opinions, of whom both were easy to live with, and one had plenty of money. The electoral calm in which he now basked was in striking contrast with all that

* "Philadelphia: 5th July, 1775.

"Mr. Strahan,—You are a member of Parliament, and one of that majority which has doomed my country to destruction. You have begun to burn our towns and murder our people. Look upon your hands. They are stained with the blood of your relations! You and I were long friends. You are now my enemy, and I am

"Yours,

"B. FRANKLIN."

There was some excuse for a French editor who took the letter in sad earnest.

awaited him from the moment when he set his foot the Westminster hustings.

The dissolution found Burke, as well as Fox, at with regard to his electioneering prospects. The pat of his borough was tired of bringing into Parliam private friends, from whom he was loth to take a s ling; and who, not being local landowners, could do thing towards helping forward his own election for county. Burke, with his reverence for the British c stitution as it existed, recognised the situation fran and almost sympathetically. "I am extremely anxio he wrote to Lord Rockingham, "about the fate of L Verney and that borough. It is past all descripti past all conception, the supineness, neglect and bl security of my friend. He will be cheated, if he not robbed." But none the less the blow was a he one. "Sometimes when I am alone," (Burke's le proceeded,) "in spite of all my efforts I fall into melancholy which is inexpressible. Whether I ou not totally to abandon this public station, for whic am so unfit, and have of course been so unfortunate know not. Most assuredly I never will put my t within the door of St. Stephen's chapel without be as much my own master as hitherto I have bee Lord Rockingham hastened to relieve his friend's sol tude, and placed at his disposal one of his own se at Malton. While travelling thither Burke learned t there were other public thieves busy at election ti besides those who frequented the waiting-room at

Treasury, for he was stopped by two highwaymen on Finchley Common. In the same week the Prime Minister met the same fate. The perils of the road, at a season when the lot of a politician was already hard enough without them, may be estimated by the circumstance that Lord North set out on his journey expecting to be robbed, while Burke's feeling was surprise at his good fortune in never having been robbed before.

A compliment was in store for Burke more valuable even than the confidence and affection of a Rockingham. Many of the citizens of Bristol had had enough of scandals and disorders at home and in the colonies, and were desirous of lighting upon a representative who had studied business in its larger aspect, and who understood the close connection between sound trade and good government. They found their man in Burke; and he had just been chaired at Malton when he received an invitation to contest Bristol. He placed down no money. He would give no pledges. Even about America he promised nothing but impartial consideration of matters deeply concerning the interests of a commercial community which still claimed to be the second port in the kingdom. To borrow a phrase from the vocabulary of transatlantic politics, he ran upon his record; and a grand record it was, as he laid it before the people of Bristol in the speech which he delivered at the moment of his arrival amongst them. "When I first devoted myself to the public service, I considered how I should render myself fit for it; and this I did by

endeavouring to discover what it was that gave this country the rank it holds in the world. I found that our prosperity and dignity arose from our constitution and our commerce. Both these I have spared no study to understand, and no endeavour to support. I now appear before you to make trial whether my earnest endeavours have been so wholly oppressed by the weakness of my abilities as to be rendered insignificant in the eyes of a great trading city. This is my trial to-day. My industry is not on trial. Of my industry I am sure." He had not slept, he said, from the time that he received their summons to the time that he was addressing them in their Guildhall; and, if he was chosen their member, he would be as far from slumbering and sleeping, when their service required him to be awake, as he had been when coming to offer himself as a candidate for their favour.

It was a noble compact, and on his side it was nobly kept. He came victorious out of a struggle, so protracted, and to his leading supporters so terribly expensive, that it might well have aroused, in a mind acute as his, some faint suspicion that the British constitution required not only defending but amending. His colleague, by one of those freaks of luck which so often allot to men, otherwise obscure, a conspicuous but uncomfortable niche in history, will pass to the end of time as the prototype of a political nonentity. But, in truth, he had both spirit and ability, and could explain himself with effect not only to a throng of triumphant

partisans, but, as was afterwards shown on many occasions, to a hostile House of Commons. At the declaration of the poll, so far from saying ditto to Mr. Burke, Mr. Cruger spoke first; and a good third of Mr. Burke's speech consisted in a statement of the points on which he differed from Mr. Cruger.

In many other constituencies besides Bristol there was plenty of independence, and little flagrant corruption. It was to an unusual degree a country gentleman's election. The King, so far back as August, had prophesied that a dissolution would fill the House with men of landed property, as the Nabobs, Planters, and other volunteers were not ready for the battle. There was less money forthcoming than on the last occasion; and, which was more to the purpose, people needed to be very cautious how they spent what they were prepared to part with. Mr. Grenville's Act (as Horace Walpole said) now hung out all its terrors. The rich Londoners had been taken by surprise, and did not venture at that eleventh hour to throw about their guineas and banknotes. The squires who lived close at hand, and who loved to entertain even where there was nothing to be got by it, had established a claim on the suffrages of rural boroughs by a course of hospitality which no laws, except those of health, could punish. It was not a crime for a host, who himself took his share, to give his friend a couple of bottles of wine and half a bowl of punch, and provide him with a bed in which to sleep them off. And again the large

proprietors, who could afford to set aside a square mile of grass from the plough and the dairy farm, had at their disposal abundant material for sustaining their influence and popularity. A great family, which represented a great town, made little of keeping up a herd of five or six hundred deer for the express object of supplying the Corporation banquets, and the private tables of important citizens. The breaking-up of a deer-park was in those days regarded as an infallible symptom that the owner of it had done with electioneering. "Harry Mills was with me yesterday," (so runs a letter which is worth quoting,) "and says it now begins to be suspected by Sir John's friends that he does not mean to offer himself again for Newcastle. It is affirmed that he is going to dispark Roadley, and lay it out in farms. All your Newcastle friends have been served with venison. And indeed I do not think there can be a more successful battery played off against a Corporation than one plentifully supplied with venison and claret." This letter was addressed in 1777 to Stoney Bowes, who had just been beaten in a bye-election for Newcastle-on-Tyne by the head of a family which had represented that city, with a few short intervals, for more than a century.*

* *Report of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle-on-Tyne for 1857.* Bowes was the original of Barry Lyndon, and a still greater scoundrel, with an even more extraordinary story. Thackeray, by a stroke of genius, turned him from a mean hound into a swaggering ruffian; and such as Thackeray made him, he will remain.

Apart altogether from what he gave them, the free-men and freeholders preferred a neighbour for his own sake; and, whoever else had a chance against him, a courtier had none. Where bribery, (said Horace Walpole,) was out of the question, they would give their votes to a man of birth who resided in their own district, or to a clever talking candidate from a distance who could show them a specimen of the style in which he would denounce sinecures if they sent him to Parliament. But from neither of those two classes did Walpole hope for any advantage to the nation. The country gentlemen were bitterly angry with the colonists; and, as for the bustling politicians, the King would still be able to buy the representatives themselves, though the representatives did not venture to buy the electors. And so his Majesty appeared to think; for, as soon as the first contests had been decided, he directed the Secretary of the Treasury to let him see the names of those who had been successful, tabulated under the heads of "Pro," "Con," and "Doubtful."

Walpole's belief that the new House of Commons would be no less compliant than the last was shared by even abler men who watched our politics from without. That was the sense in which the Prussian Minister wrote to Potsdam; and the old King replied that he never expected otherwise, as he had long known that money was the mainspring of the British Constitution.* Franklin, from what he saw of the elections, went so

* *Le Roi Frédéric au Comte de Maltzan: 14 Nov. 1774.*

far as to doubt whether there was any use in having a House of Commons. "Since a Parliament," he wrote, "is always to do as a ministry would have it, why should we not be governed by the ministry in the first instance? They could afford to govern us much cheaper, the Parliament being a very expensive machine, that requires a great deal of oiling and greasing at the people's charge." But, dark as the future was, it contained an element of hope which escaped these sharp-sighted observers. They had reckoned without the country gentlemen who sate for their own boroughs, and the still greater country gentlemen who had been chosen by the counties. Of the former sort there were many more than in the last Parliament. The price of seats was lower by from thirty to forty per cent., and was soon to be lower still; for a membership of parliament, like a commission in the army, ruled highest in time of assured peace, and fell to next to nothing by the end of a long war. Gibbon, who was a country gentleman against his will, and who remained one no longer than the first moment when he could find a purchaser for the last of his acres, was sent to Westminster by a Cornish kinsman at the general election of 1774. For some time he was left in ignorance whether his borough would be Liskeard or St. Germans. All that he knew was that he would have to contribute the half of two thousand four hundred pounds, and that Mr. Eliot would consent to payment being postponed until his second son, who was a lad of thirteen, had

come of age. Those terms, even as between relatives, indicated a very different state of the market from that which prevailed in 1768, when George Selwyn got nine thousand for the double seat at Ludgershall. A bill for twelve hundred pounds, or twelve thousand either, bearing no interest, and with eight years to run, would have been within the compass even of Charles Fox; and there is no wonder that, at such prices, a patron with a fair share of public spirit 'preferred to sit himself, or to keep his borough within the family. Indeed a man who cared nothing for the commonwealth, and had a single eye to the main chance, might well take the same course; for there was every prospect that a member, however cheaply he got into Parliament, when once there would be able to sell himself for as much as ever.

The county members formed a class by themselves, and a class to whom the nation owes an incalculable debt. They were great proprietors of long standing in their neighbourhood, and true aristocrats, indifferent to the frowns and favours of the central government; while they were as proud of the confidence of their constituents as of the extent of their domains, the age of their castles, and the running of their horses. The vast sums which leading families spent over a county contest are already inconceivable to us who hear men of property grumble at having to find twelve or fifteen hundred pounds where their ancestors jauntily laid down twice as many thousands. The explanation is

that, in the eighteenth century, the position of a county member was valued for itself, and not for what it might lead to. A rural potentate, who sate for the shire in which he lived, was thought as good as a lord, and was a great deal better liked, on his own countryside, in the London clubs, and especially within the walls of Parliament. The House of Commons took a domestic interest in a distinction which reflected credit on itself. Mr. Coke of Norfolk, with fifty thousand a year in his county, represented it for more than fifty years, and did not accept a peerage until long after his brother members had hailed him with an admiring cheer the first time that he walked down the floor after having had a son born to him at the age of seventy-six. The belief that the Upper and Lower Houses ought to be kept apart, and that their own was the finer institution of the two, was held not only by members of parliament, but by the people who elected them. The freeholders of Somersetshire went so far as to pledge themselves not to vote for the brother or the son of a peer supported.* It was a sentiment not of recent, and certainly not of democratic, origin; for the feeling of Somersetshire had long ago been expressed, with a vigour that left nothing to be desired, by the most celebrated Tory who ever killed a fox within its confines. "It is true," said Squire Western, "there be larger estates in the kingdom, but not in this county.

* *History of the Boroughs of Great Britain*, London, 1794. Vol. II. page 44.

Besides, most o' zuch great estates be in the hands of lords, and I hate the very name of themmum."

The honour of representing a shire was neither conferred lightly nor retained easily. A candidate, whether he presented himself, or whether he was put forward by a junta of local grandees, if his name was unfavourably received by the freeholders in county-meeting assembled, would find at the declaration of the poll that he had lost his money and his labour. Those freeholders did not love a new man; and they interpreted the phrase in a manner creditable to themselves and to the object of their choice. "I cannot," Gibbon wrote to his friend Holroyd, "yet think you ripe for a county member. Five years are very little to remove the obvious objection of a *novus homo*, and of all objections it is perhaps the most formidable. Seven more years of an active life will spread your fame among the great body of the Freeholders, and to them you may one day offer yourself on the most honourable footing, that of a candidate whose real services to the county have deserved and will repay the favour which he then solicits."

The county electors proved a man before they took him; but none the less they were careful to see that the services which he promised were duly given. Confidence, with them, was not an empty word; and they permitted their representative an almost boundless latitude of action at Westminster, demanding only that he should not be inactive. They expected that he should attend

diligently and faithfully to the business of the nation, all the more because they were ready to allow that he understood that business better than themselves. George Selwyn, as a borough member, soon found that his constituents troubled themselves very little about what he did, or left undone, so long as he refrained from cutting off their water supply, which came from a hill on his estate; and was at the pains of forwarding to the Prince of Wales, with the compliments of the Corporation, their annual offering of a lamprey pie. When he played truant during a political crisis, they were personal friends, and not electors, who appealed to his loyalty towards George the Third and, where that failed, to his self-interest. "You are now," wrote Lord Bolingbroke in 1767, "attending a sick friend; but I believe the Earls will think you have neglected the first of all duties, that of being ready to vote as they order. In short, George, you who love your namesake, and hate to see a poor helpless young man like himself oppressed by the obstinacy of such men as George Grenville and Lord Rockingham, must fly to his assistance. Consider the obligations you have to him, and do not let him be forced to give your place away to somebody who will attend." When Selwyn was longer absent from town than usual, his correspondents, writing with quite sufficient breadth of detail, affected to believe that he was detained by the attractions of a lady;—a supposition which, as applied to him, passed in that circle for the height of irony. But the movements of a county repre-

sentative were subjected to a much more jealous scrutiny. "The member of St. Germans might lurk in the country, but the Knight of Cornwall must attend the House of Commons." So wrote Gibbon about his cousin Mr. Eliot, with a lazy sense of superiority very consolatory to a man of letters who had already discovered himself to be no debater, and was beginning to suspect that he was not meant for a member of parliament.

The great country gentlemen in the House of Commons entertained the prejudices of their order; and some among them had their full allowance of faults as individuals. But they felt that consciousness of responsibility which animates a race of men who, over and over again, and time out of mind, have decided the fate of a nation. They and their forerunners, for a century and a half back, had borne their share in those successive political reactions which, in defiance of strict logic, had saved England alternately from arbitrary power and factious violence. Foresight was not their strong point, particularly when it was a question of running counter to the wishes of the sovereign. They never had been very quick to detect and withstand the early stages of a dangerous policy; but, in the last resort, they were not going to see their country ruined. Moreover their hands were pure. Quiet folks in the villages, who were well aware that their own part in a system based upon profusion and venality was to get nothing and pay for everything, never felt so comfortable as when they were represented at St. Stephen's by

a man who desired to be no greater or richer than he was; whether the motive of his contentment was personal pride, or public spirit, or both of them together. Those county magnates, who likewise were county members, detested placemen as cordially as did their constituents. The most important division, both in its moral and political aspects, which took place between the adoption of the Grand Remonstrance and the Second Reading of the Great Reform Bill,—was on the occasion when, in April 1780, Parliament was called upon to declare that the growing influence of the Crown was disastrous to the nation. In that division sixty-two among the English county members voted for the Resolution, and only seven against it.

Holding their heads high, these men did not esteem themselves as delegates, and still less as courtiers, but as senators in the true sense of the term; and not even the Roman senate, in its most powerful days, was more supremely unconscious of the pressure of outside forces. Party organisation, as we know it, was not then in existence. A man, who asked nothing from the Government, was free to take his own line. If he was not himself a leader, he sought for direction from those of his colleagues whose judgment he trusted, and who put forward their views in a manner which pleased his taste and persuaded his reason. The very last quarter to which he would look for guidance was the daily *press*, at a time when reporters were almost sure to be *excluded from a debate* on any question by which

opinion was deeply stirred, and when editors were much too afraid of the Speaker's Warrant to be formidable censors or frank and effective counsellors. The more sessions a House of Commons had sate; the more good speeches it had heard; and the further it was removed from a general election, with all the opportunity for the exertion of illegitimate influence which at such a time a bad ministry enjoyed;—the better instrument it became for conducting the business of the country. That was the deliberate opinion of Burke; and he held it so strongly that he refused to support any proposal for shortening the duration of parliaments. So greatly, he said, were members affected by weighty arguments, cleverly put, that it was worth any man's while to take pains to speak well; and if, like Charles Fox, he spoke well whether he took pains or not, such a Parliament as that in which he now found himself was the very arena for an orator. He had fallen on days when rhetoric was at a premium, if only it was spontaneous; if it had good sense behind it; and if the quarter from which it came was favourably regarded by those for whose benefit it was produced. Aristocrats to the core, they lent their ears the more readily to one of themselves; and the titles of Fox to rank as an aristocrat, though abnormal, were generally and willingly recognised. His grandfather on the one side had been with Charles the First on the scaffold. His great-great-grandfather on the other side had stood to the same monarch in a much nearer relation; and the world had changed too

little since the days of Monmouth and the Duke of Berwick for men of the world to trouble themselves greatly about the obliquity of the channel through which royal blood flowed in the veins of one whom they liked, and, to their surprise, were beginning even to respect. Charles had led his contemporaries, and only too many of his elders, in a career of fashion and folly, as he was now to lead them, with a pre-eminence equally undisputed, along more arduous and reputable paths. He sprang from a line of statesmen, conspicuous in place, and long in years, though not in numbers; for Stephen Fox was serving the Crown four generations before ever his grandson entered public life. That grandson had now the authority of an old member in a fresh parliament, which only knew his scrapes by hearsay, and (whatever might be the case with its successor) was not destined to witness a repetition of them. Eloquent and attractive, kindly and familiar with high and humble, he was inspired by a great cause with the new and needed qualities of patience, industry, and caution. In six years he acquired over his colleagues a mastery which, if the next dissolution had been deferred for another twelvemonth, would have made him, (what he soon afterwards became, and but for the unwisdom of a moment might have remained,) the master of the country. But that House of Commons, before it passed away,—teachable by events, and great in spite of errors,—had dealt a mortal blow to the famous system which the *King and Bute*, with the potent aid of Charles Fox's

father, had constructed. It was a system which, as its one achievement of the first order, brought about the American war, and made England sick, once and for all, of the very name of personal government.

But the lesson had not been learned when, late in November 1774, the Parliament met. For all that appeared on the surface, there was nothing to distinguish the occasion from others. Few signs were visible of serious dissatisfaction, or even of widespread interest. The King's speech began as usual with a tirade against the province of Massachusetts, and a guarded allusion to the spirit of disaffection prevalent in the other colonies. The Opposition went to work in their desultory fashion. They confined themselves to asking for copies of the official correspondence relating to America, and for leave to defer making up their minds till further information had been given; but, small as was the demand which they made upon the courage of their party, they only succeeded in rallying seventy-three adherents. Even this paltry skirmish was as jealously guarded from the eyes of unprivileged spectators as the Potsdam manœuvres. The precincts were cleared of all strangers except members of the Irish Parliament, who were allowed what was for them the very superfluous opportunity of witnessing how smoothly things went in a deliberative assembly which was managed by bribery. Charles Fox gave the new House a first taste of his quality, and denounced the closing of the gallery as a mere trick to

stifle inquiry; to shorten debate; and to enable ministers to maintain a convenient silence, and an air of unconcern which, alarming as they must have known the state of the nation to be, with characteristic effrontery they still professed to feel.

In spite of all precautions against publicity, one sentence got abroad which threw as much light on the intentions of the Government as many speeches; for Lord North contrived to say that the last Parliament had been a good one. He said it with Wilkes opposite him, whose presence in the existing House of Commons was an unspoken but unanswerable condemnation of the House which had preceded it. For six years the law had been strained and violated, popular rights had been trampled under foot, disorder had been provoked and blood been shed. All this had been done in order to establish the contention,—not that John Wilkes had been unduly elected,—but that he was unfit and unworthy then, or ever, to be a member of Parliament. And now he was visible on his bench, with his colleague for Middlesex and three out of the four members for London city round him; all of whom had signed a paper which virtually was an agreement to do as Wilkes bade them. There he sate, in secure anticipation of that popularity which, in the most good-natured of assemblies, awaits a man whom it has taken special and notorious pains to keep outside its doors. In order to prevent his election George the Third had been prepared *copiously to administer* those “gold pills” by which, in

the royal view, a King of England did well to influence public opinion. He had compassed town and country in vain to find Wilkes an opponent, and had urged the Secretary of the Treasury to set the Middlesex election "again on float," after Mr. Robinson himself had pronounced it as past praying or paying for. It was, indeed, a pill too bitter to be gilded. Wilkes could not be excluded from Parliament, and still less could he be ejected when once he had got there. No candidate would face the crowd at Brentford, and no minister cared to have Wilkes and America on his hands at the same moment. There was something heroic in the complacent dignity with which Samuel Johnson (writing, it can hardly be doubted, on a hint from the Minister) announced that the most awkward of customers was at last to be left with all the honours of victory. "They," said the Doctor, "who are still filling our ears with Mr. Wilkes lament a grievance that is now at an end. Mr. Wilkes may be chosen, if any will choose him; and the precedent of his exclusion makes not any honest or decent man think himself in danger."* The warning which the situation contained, if George the Third had rightly interpreted it, would have been cheaply purchased at the price of even a deeper humiliation. For the aspect of Wilkes among the crowd of members, cheerfully listening to the King's Speech at the bar of the House of Lords, was a foretaste of the scene eleven years later on when John Adams, the accredited am-

* *The Patriot*, 1774.

bassador of the United States, presented himself at St. James's as the first of all his fellow-citizens to stand before his Majesty in a diplomatic character.

On the first day that parliament, and most of all a new parliament, is assembled after a troubled and eventful recess, inexperienced politicians who expect great things are surprised to find that, instead of being very noisy and angry, everybody is very shy. But in 1774 the deadness was of longer duration than a single evening; for it was in the men and not in the moment. The winter session ran its course. Estimates were brought forward; soldiers, sailors, and monies were voted; and week after week of December slipped along as quietly as if the affairs of an empire, at peace with itself throughout its borders, were being administered by a cabinet of Solons. The fact was that the principal members of the Opposition were engaged among themselves in one of their periodical discussions of a proposal which had for them an extraordinary attraction, and on which they expended as much ink in trying to convince each other as would have covered every bookseller's counter in the kingdom with pamphlets showing up the policy of the Government. That proposal, to use their own favourite description, was a plan of non-attendance for Lord Rockingham's friends. The notion was that England would be brought to her senses by the contemplation of the empty benches. For very shame she would gird *herself* to the task of fighting her own political battles *until such time* as she could prevail on her leaders to

leave their tent, and place themselves once more at the head of a resolute and repentant host of followers. The prospect was flattering; and the Rockinghams would long ago have tried the experiment but for Burke, who told them that their secession must infallibly result in the Ministry being more free than ever for mischief, and in they themselves being forgotten by the public. Till the Christmas holidays, however, were over they could defend their inactivity by the excuse that they were waiting for papers. On the nineteenth of January the papers came. Lord North presented to the House a collection of letters, not from Massachusetts only, but from the governors of every colony, which proved beyond doubt or question that the whole continent of America, from New Hampshire to Georgia, had imitated and in many instances outstripped Boston in what the King's speech had described as violent and criminal resistance and disobedience to the law.

The case was presented in a style which might well arouse the envy of a modern politician whose vocation it has been to pick out the essential incidents in a long story from among the tiresome and intricate details with which the omnivorous appetite of Parliament has for many years past compelled the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office to load its table. With no official jargon, but in plain eighteenth-century English, such as was spoken by the people whose deeds were being related, and by the members of parliament who were to read the papers, the Governors and Deputy Governors set

forth their budget of disastrous and ominous tidings. They told how the tea-ships had been turned away from every port where they showed themselves; how the farmers were drilling and arming, and were sinking the boats and overturning the carts which conveyed forage and provisions for the use of the army; how the judges had cried off from their duties, and the King's writ, (very unlike his Custom-house officers,) had altogether ceased to run; how the Governor of New Hampshire had just completed his admirable arrangement for supplying the wants of the garrison in Boston when the people of Portsmouth, his own principal trading-town, rose upon him, stormed his arsenal, and carried off a hundred barrels of powder. The one bright spot was in Virginia where, when the House of Burgesses had turned themselves into a Convention and met without leave from the Governor, the Headmaster of the Grammar-school had refused to preach them a sermon. But, as the patriots were much better provided with eloquence than with ammunition, the news from Williamsburg did not counterbalance the serious character of the news from Portsmouth. Graver by far than any acted manifestations of discontent and estrangement were the Resolutions which had been passed at Philadelphia by that Congress in which Patrick Henry and the Adamses had been spokesmen, and Washington a guiding spirit. What purpose, human or divine, could be served by trying to dragoon such a population, so led and so minded, living *along fifteen hundred miles of coast across three thou-*

sand miles of ocean, into paying a threepenny duty into the British Treasury?

It was a problem striking enough to impress the Poet Laureate. On the last Birthday William Whitehead had made an appeal to the loyalty of Massachusetts under the guise of prophecy:

The prodigal again returns,
And on his parent's neck reclines.
With honest shame his bosom burns,
And in his eye affection shines.

He now thought it time to sing a word in season to the address of his Sovereign, and in 1775 he thus invoked the powers who guide the hearts of kings:

Beyond the vast Atlantic tide
Extend your healing influence wide
Where millions claim your care.
Inspire each just, each filial thought,
And let the nations round be taught
The British oak is there.

The advice was well meant; but it fell as flat as the lines in which it was couched. Mason, a stout Whig, has commended Whitehead for insinuating sound counsel into the royal ear in the shape of praise for wisdom and clemency which the King, unfortunately, had not the slightest intention of meriting. But the Laureates of the eighteenth century were not of those to whom men look for a contribution to the stock of political wisdom; nor, except in the case of Warton, for any other wisdom. Doctor Johnson, who liked Whitehead's politics even less

than his poetry, called his odes "insupportable nonsense;" and posterity, irrespective of politics, has agreed with Johnson. Whitehead won his spurs, (if that phrase can be applied to the rider of such a Pegasus,) by a satire the title of which was "An Epistle on the Danger of Writing in Verse." It was his earliest serious performance; and it would have been well if the reflections which the theme suggested had warned him never to attempt another.

So far as rhymes can throw light upon the relations of George the Third to the colonies, mankind will neglect Whitehead, and turn to the Birthday Ode of another bard who was not of the stuff out of which, in his day, a poet laureate was cut. What Robert Burns thought about the American war, and the policy of its authors, may be seen in the fourth and fifth stanzas of "The Dream;" written, or professing to be written, on the fourth of June 1786. The poem is as like Aristophanes as any piece in our language. There is nothing in the choruses of the Old Comedy more Attic, in every essential quality, than the estimate of those Ministers whom the King delighted to honour, the compliment to Chatham, the admonition to the Prince of Wales, and the advice to the young Princesses.

CHAPTER VII.

THE KING AND LORD CHATHAM. FOX AND GEORGE SELWYN.
FOX COMES TO THE FRONT. THE AMERICAN FISHERIES.

THE King had long ago settled his policy. "I am clear," he announced to Lord North in the previous September, "that there must always be one tax to keep up the right, and as such I approve of the Tea Duty." To secure this object he was prepared to fight, and was in a hurry to begin. Ten days before Parliament met, the first instalment of the American news had already reached him. "I am not sorry," he wrote, "that the line of conduct seems now chalked out, which the enclosed despatches thoroughly justify. The New England Governments are in a state of rebellion. Blows must decide whether they are to be subject to this country or independent." He made no attempt to conceal his satisfaction when he learned that the quarrel could not be patched up. Yet he did not, like Napoleon, love war for its own sake; nor, like Louis the Fourteenth, was he unscrupulously eager to make his country great and his own name great with it. Almost as soon as he mounted the throne he had given a convincing proof of his indifference to *personal* glory and national aggrandisement.

At a time of life when the desire of fame is a sign of virtue, or at worst a venial fault, during the height of the most triumphant war in which Britain has been engaged he had thrust from power the ablest war-minister whose deeds have been recorded in her history. He deserted the greatest ally we ever possessed, at the exact moment of his greatest need. To the end of his days Frederic of Prussia did not forget the pang of that appalling and unexpected blow; and we were soon to learn that, when he remembered an injury, he was not of a nature to forgive it. The warlike promptings which actuated George the Third were neither ambitious nor patriotic, but political. He looked on the Americans not as foreign enemies arrayed against England, but as Englishmen who wanted more liberty than he thought was good for them; and he sent his fleets and his armies against them just as he would have ordered his Footguards to support the constables in clearing the street of a mob of Wilkites.

On one point, and one point alone, the King was in agreement with the great statesman out of whose control, as the first act of his reign, he had taken the destinies of the country. Chatham, like George the Third, regarded the colonists as compatriots. In his sight they were Englishmen, who did not choose to be taxed without being represented; Whigs, who had not abandoned the principles of the Great Revolution; fellow-citizens who could not be subjugated without *prospective*, and even imminent, danger to the liberties

of both our own islands. For Ireland had as much at stake as Great Britain, and Irishmen of all creeds and classes were alive and awake to the consequences which would ensue at home if the cause of America was overborne and ruined. In such a contest, (so Chatham insisted,) every man had a right, or rather every man was under an obligation, to choose his side in accordance with the political faith which was in him. This was not a struggle against an external foe, but a dispute within our own family. "I trust," he wrote on the Christmas eve of 1774, "that it will be found impossible for freemen in England to wish to see three millions of Englishmen slaves in America." A month afterwards he had read the parliamentary papers, with the insight of one who had received and answered a thousand despatches from the same regions. "What a correspondence!" he exclaimed. "What a dialogue between Secretary of State and General in such a crisis! Could these bundles reach the shades below, the remarks of Ximenes and of Cortez upon them would be amusing." He need not have brought Ximenes in. When Chatham closed the volume, a yet stronger ruler, and one who knew even better how to write to colonies and how to fight for them, had made himself master of the miserable narrative.

Already, before he knew the particulars, the heart of Chatham was too hot for silence. As the doom against America, (to use his own phraseology,) might at any hour be pronounced from the Treasury Bench, no

time was to be lost in offering his poor thoughts to the public, for preventing a civil war before it was inevitably fixed. On the first day that the Lords met after Christmas he moved to address his Majesty to withdraw the troops from Boston, in order to open the way towards a happy settlement of the dangerous troubles in America. It was not a tactical success. Chatham had told Rockingham beforehand that he intended to pronounce himself against insisting on that theoretical right to tax America which Rockingham's own government had asserted in the Declaratory Act of 1766. Some of the Whigs were unwilling to throw over a Statute which in its day had formed part of a great compromise. Others were prepared to consider the question of repealing the Act, whenever that proper time arrived which in politics is always so very long upon its journey. The more prudent of them exerted themselves to suppress any public manifestation of the annoyance which their party felt. "My Lord," wrote the Duke of Manchester to his leader, "you must pardon my freedom. In the present situation of affairs nothing can be so advantageous to Administration, nothing so ruinous to opposition, nothing so fatal to American liberty, as a break with Lord Chatham and his friends. I do not mean to overrate his abilities, or to despair of our cause, though he no longer existed; but, while the man treads this earth, his name, his successes, his eloquence, the cry of the many, must exalt him into a consequence perhaps far above *his station*." But the resentment of the Rockinghams

was all the more bitter because they had to keep it among themselves. In their communications with each other they charged Chatham with the two unpardonable crimes of forcing their hand, and taking the wind out of their sails; and in the House they supported him reluctantly, and in small numbers.

But that was all of little moment compared with the fact that a famous and faithful servant of England had made known to all and sundry his view of the conduct which, at that complicated crisis, loyalty to England demanded. William Pitt, then in his sixteenth year, had helped his father to prepare for the debate; a process which, according to the experience of others who enjoyed the same privilege, consisted in hearing a grand speech delivered from an armchair, entirely different in arrangement, in wording, and in everything except the doctrine which it enforced, from the series of grand speeches which next day were declaimed in public when the orator had his audience around him. "The matter and manner," (so the lad wrote to his mother on the morning after the discussion,) "were striking; far beyond what I can express. It was everything that was superior; and, though it had not the desired effect on an obdurate House of Lords, it must have had an infinite effect without doors, the bar being crowded with Americans. Lord Suffolk, I cannot say answered him, but spoke after him. My father has slept well, but is lame in one ankle from standing so long. No wonder he is lame. His first speech lasted

over an hour, and the second half an hour; surely the two finest speeches that ever were made before, unless by himself." The most notable passage was that in which Chatham declared that the cause of America was the cause of all Irishmen, Catholic and Protestant alike, and of all true Whigs in England; and in his mouth the name of Whig included every man who was not a friend to arbitrary power. The colonists were our countrymen and, if we persisted in treating them as aliens and foes, the perils which awaited us were incalculable. Foreign war, (so he told the House of Lords,) was at our door. France and Spain were watching our conduct, and waiting for the maturity of our errors. The argument was one not to be employed lightly; but if ever a statesman was justified in referring to our neighbours across the British Channel as our natural enemies it was at a period when we had been at war with France for thirty years out of the last eighty-five, and were still to be at war with her for twenty-five years out of the next forty. And if ever there was a man who might, without a sense of abasement, refer to danger from abroad as an additional reason for dealing justly with our own people, it was the minister who had fought France until he had landed her in such a plight that no one, unless our government was imprudent to madness, could foresee the time when she would be in a position to fight us again.

Anyone who objected to Chatham's attitude on the American question was at liberty to term him a poor

patriot and a bad citizen; and whatever reproach attached itself to his fame must be shared by those who thought with him. Charles Fox was not easily abashed, even when he was in worse company than Chatham's; and at no time of his life did he care what names he was called as long as the course of action which earned them was such that he could defend in the face of day. He did not shrink from defining, as explicitly and clearly as he stated everything, the governing motive by which his conduct during those trying years was determined. "I hope that it will be a point of honour among us all to support the American pretensions in adversity as much as we did in their prosperity, and that we shall never desert those who have acted *unsuccessfully* from Whig principles, while we continue to profess our admiration of those who succeeded in the same principles in 1688." That was how he wrote to his familiars in October 1776, when the colonists were on the edge of destruction, and when the liberties of England seemed worth but a very few years' purchase in the view of some who were neither fools nor cowards. Among them was Horace Walpole, who pronounced himself unable to conceive how a friend of British freedom could view with equanimity the subjection of America. He little thought, Walpole said, that he should have lived to see any single Englishman exulting over the defeat of our countrymen, when they were fighting for our liberty as well as for their own. Lord Chatham was not such an Englishman, nor Charles Fox

either. They both of them looked upon the conflict as a civil war, in which no man was justified in ranking himself against those whom in his conscience he believed to be in the right.

But when France stepped in, and our country was in danger, Fox took his place amongst the foremost,—nay, it may be said, as the foremost,—of Britain's defenders; for no public man, out of office, has ever before or since played so energetic and effective a part in the management of a great war. "Attack France," he cried, "for she is your object. The war against America is against your own countrymen; that against France is against your inveterate enemy and rival." In a series of speeches, replete with military instinct, he argued in favour of assuming the offensive against the fresh assailants who came crowding in upon a nation which already had been fighting until it had grown weary and disheartened. Aggressive action, (so he never ceased repeating,) was alike dictated by the necessities of the situation, and by the character, the spirit and the traditions of our people. He urged the ministry, with marvellous force, knowledge, and pertinacity, to rescue the navy from the decay into which they had allowed it to sink. When the French and Spanish fleets rode the Channel, with a superiority in ships of the line of two to one, his anxiety carried him and kept him as close to the scene of action as the most enterprising of landsmen could penetrate. He haunted the country houses and garrison towns of the south-western coast, and lived

much on shipboard where, as anyone who knows sailors could well believe, he was a general favourite. He shared the bitter mortification which his gallant friend the future Lord St. Vincent felt when kept in harbour at such a moment; and he went so far as to entertain a hope of finding himself, a cheery and popular stowaway, in the thick of what promised to be the most desperate battle which, on her own element, England would ever have fought. He sympathised warmly with those of his comrades and kinsmen who, having refused to serve against America, were rejoiced at the prospect of active employment when France entered the field; just as a royalist, who would have cut off his right hand rather than fire a pistol for the Parliament at Dunbar or Worcester, might have been proud to do his share among Cromwell's soldiers when they were driving the Spanish pikemen across the sandhills at Dunkirk. With a steady grasp, and unerring clearness of vision, Fox steered his course through intricate and tempestuous waters; and succeeded in reconciling, under difficulties as abstruse as ever beset a statesman, his fidelity to a political creed with the duty which he owed to his country.

It was the ill fate of Charles Fox that, through the stirring period which lay in front of him, he was exposed to the close observation of a man who made it his profession to collect and catalogue the follies of the town. We have long been familiar with the series of letters in which the hardest livers and loosest talkers of

London, from 1745 onwards, confessed their own frailties, and reported and magnified those of their neighbours, to George Selwyn. Now, of late months, publicity has been conferred on Selwyn's own letters to the Earl of Carlisle,—a man as amiable and honourable as any who passed his time in the midst and after the fashion of that untoward generation.* Charles Fox from the first exercised over the writer of those letters a strong fascination. Selwyn saw again the father in the son. He used to declare that the only minister of state with whom, in the course of his life, he had ever spent an hour pleasantly was Lord Holland;** and he now began to spend in Charles's company as many hours as the young fellow would consent to bestow on him. "I have passed two evenings with him," he wrote in 1774, "at supper at Almack's, and never was anybody more agreeable, and the more so from his having no pretensions to it." Selwyn was glad to dine at Charles's table, whenever the brokers had left him a piece of furniture that he could call his own; but all the while that he was listening to the young man's sallies he watched him like a cat. And then he would sit down at home, with Charles's claret and venison in him, and pour out on paper his budget of tattle. It was not from any special dislike of the lad, whom on the whole he loved; but

* The Manuscripts of the Earl of Carlisle, preserved at Castle Howard. *Historical Manuscripts Commission* Fifteenth Report, Appendix, Part VI.

** *Carlisle Manuscripts*, page 666.

from the attraction which anything disagreeable and discreditable has for a veteran gossip.

Selwyn's friendship for Lord Carlisle was genuine and active; and he exchanged with him anxious and business-like communications relating to the danger in which the peer for some space of time lived on account of his having stood surety for Charles and Stephen Fox. But early in the year 1774 Lord Holland made the sacrifices necessary for relieving his sons, and the friends of his sons, from the obligations in which they had involved themselves. Thenceforward Selwyn employed himself, quite gratuitously, in recording Charles Fox's perversities and absurdities, with which he had no special concern, and which most certainly he was not in a position to reprove. There was plenty of material with which to amuse himself. He never wearied of relating how few hours Fox consumed in bed, and how many at the gaming table; how between the deals he whispered over his shoulder to the party-whip about details of business in the House of Commons; how his books and pictures were sold up, and how hard it was to get money out of his hands when any money was there. One letter narrates that Charles and Fitzpatrick won many thousands of pounds by keeping a faro-bank as partners, and then hastened to lose all their gains at quinze. Another refers to the doubts which had arisen whether Fox could continue to sit in Parliament and draw the pension for which, to oblige the Government, he had exchanged his Clerkship of the Pells in Ireland.

Selwyn describes the excitement with which the young man ran from one lawyer to another to procure their opinions on the case; and the flightiness that sent him off to Newmarket, (where he lost everything he possessed, for he appears at that moment to have been in cash,) "leaving all the opinions to themselves."

Much of this was probably true; and, where true, it was rather laughable and very regrettable. But there was another side to the story. Selwyn greatly admired the skill of Fox in aiming his rhetorical shafts, even when they were directed at the leaders whom Selwyn followed, and against the continuance of the sinecures out of the emoluments of which he paid his way. But he had studied the seamy side of human nature too long and too exclusively to perceive the higher attributes by which the young statesman rapidly and surely acquired favour with eminent politicians of blameless character. It needed something more solid than mere talents and graces to become the chief of a connection which included Rockingham and Richmond, Portland and Burke, Savile, Dunning and the Cavendishes. These men were older than Fox; and, in the company of his elders, even one who is by nature incapable of showing himself different from what he really is takes care to appear at his best. But where moral qualities are in question the young are never deceived by a contemporary; and Charles was not only loved, but trusted and respected, by all of his party who were within five years of his age. The *secret of his influence* is revealed by the tone of the

appeals and expostulations which kept his political comrades as nearly as possible up to his own standard of public duty. Amongst the earliest of such communications is a letter of November 1775. It touches a note seldom reached in the summonses which a parliamentary manager sends out on the eve of a critical Division. "Dear Ossory," Fox wrote, "as you desire me to let you know what is likely to come on next week, I am glad to inform you that, on Friday next, Burke will move to bring in a bill to secure the colonies against Parliamentary taxation, and to repeal the obnoxious laws. I say I am very glad that Burke is to move such a bill, because it will be the fairest test in the world to try who is really for war and who for peace. I am sure, my dear Ossory, if you do think seriously enough of this matter to let your opinion regulate your conduct, it is impossible but you must consider this as the true opportunity of declaring yourself. And indeed, if party does not blind me very much more than I am aware of, this is an occasion where a man not over-scrupulous ought to think for himself. It does not need surely the tenth part of your good sense to see how cruel and intolerable a thing it is to sacrifice thousands of lives almost without a prospect of advantage."

The esteem in which Fox was held most certainly did not in all quarters result from the blindness of partisanship. Men who observed him from the opposite benches in the House of Commons, if only they had an eye for what was good and great, gradually came to

perceive that goodness with him was only a matter of time, and that greatness was there already. Gibbon who eagerly sought his society, obtained enough of it in the course of that Parliament to make up his mind that Fox's character was as attractive as his abilities were commanding; and he never altered that opinion. "I admired," the historian wrote some years later on, "the powers of a superior man blended with the softness and simplicity of a child. Perhaps no human being was ever more perfectly exempt from the taint of malevolence, vanity or falsehood." Fox was challenged to a duel by William Adam, then a fiery supporter of Lord North, and presented himself, an easy mark, to his antagonist's pistol. His chivalrous and jaunty bearing on the scene of action first revealed to Adam what a good fellow he had undertaken to kill. He began to hear the Whig leader's speeches with indulgence, and soon with approbation, and before very long became his sworn friend and staunch supporter. Fox's eloquence was appreciated at the full value in Selwyn's own circle. "Charles Fox, who did not speak as well as he usually does according to the opinion of many, yet in mine is astonishingly great. I never attended to any speech half so much, nor ever did I discover such classical passages in any modern performance. Besides I own he convinced me."* That is a passage in a letter which was discovered among Selwyn's papers. Selwyn made no objection to

* Anthony Storer to Lord Carlisle. *Carlisle Manuscripts*, page 541.

hearing the praises of the orator sounded; but he lost patience when one of his own political allies expressed regret that Charles had taken the line which he did on public matters, "because he was such a good man."* Charles, at all events, was good enough to please a moralist of a very different school from Selwyn or any of those who were in Selwyn's intimacy. Samuel Johnson, who knew the young man well and viewed him kindly and wisely, testified to his regard for him in a phrase which every well-wisher of Fox's reputation is delighted to recall. "The King," he said, "is my master, but Fox is my friend;" and the friendship of Johnson was a prize not lightly awarded.

In his best points the Charles Fox with whom history is acquainted resembled no public men who came before him. His broad humanity, his devotion to great causes, were those of a statesman of the nineteenth century, and were not handed down to him by any predecessor. His merits were peculiarly his own, and his gravest faults were due to his education. Like Byron, but at a still earlier age, he was "let loose on the world without a martingale." At five-and-twenty, and from that to two-and-thirty, he lived as his father had taught him, and with the example of that father's surviving friend always in evidence. Selwyn at fifty and sixty and up to the verge of seventy, (for he was Charles's senior by thirty years,) led an existence which was not of a nature to qualify him for a censor of others. The

* *Carlisle Manuscripts*, page 550.

central business of his life, at which he showed himself remarkably clever, was to find wealthy bidders for the representation of his family borough, and to preserve his own seat at Gloucester. On the possession of that seat his bread depended; for he was well aware that none but a senator was worth buying. To secure this object he spared no pains, and shrank from hardly any extremity of discomfort. "You know me very well," he wrote to Carlisle in July 1774, "in thinking that my heart fails me as the time of my going to Gloucester approaches. I made a very stout resistance a fortnight ago, notwithstanding Harris's importunate summons; and now he plainly confesses that my coming down upon that pretended meeting would have been 'nugatory' as he calls it. The Devil take them; I have wished him and his Corporation in Newgate a thousand times. But there will be no trifling after the end of this next week. The Assizes begin on Monday sevensnight. Then the Judges will be met, a terrible show, for I shall be obliged to dine with them, and be in more danger from their infernal cooks than any of the criminals who are to be tried." Between elections he gave silent votes in support of the Ministry which fed him, and as few of those as he dared to give;—not on account of any scruple of conscience, but from sheer laziness. The culminating misfortune of his career was when Burke, in the interest of Economical Reform, made an inroad among his patent places the number and the multifarious nature of which were an abuse notorious even in that

venal age. "The loss," he wrote to Lord Carlisle, "of three thousand pounds a year coming after debts created by imprudence, and which might otherwise have been soon liquidated, is a blow which I confess that I was not prepared for; and, if I could not feel it for myself, I must have felt it for you." That was the system on which, at sixty-two, he still managed his affairs, and regulated his private expenditure.

Selwyn's amusements were of a piece with his serious avocations. Like Fox and Fitzpatrick he held a faro-bank, and "picked up, by fifty pounds at a time, a few hundreds." His only chance, he explained, of keeping early hours, and getting a good night's rest, was that his bank should lose; because then the players went off to bed with their winnings. What he meant by early hours may be judged from his account of one evening, when he supped at White's, sate up till nearly one o'clock telling two young noblemen "old stories," and then opened his bank and won a hundred and twenty guineas. That bank he regarded as his salvation, and wrote of it thankfully and with something very like unction. "I shall keep," he said, "to this trade, once my better guide."* It was a resolution often broken, with consequences which vexed himself, but rather diverted his acquaintances. "Selwyn," Fox wrote in 1778, "has been cut up for a large sum, after fattening for a month." Three years afterwards Anthony Storer told Lord Carlisle that their esteemed friend had lost

* *Carlisle Manuscripts*, pages 755, 484, and 491.

very heavily, and was so tearful that no one liked to ask him any question about the matter. So lived Selwyn, at a time when he was tortured by gout and threatened with dropsy; taking opiates and bark, and courses of baths, and refusing pleasant invitations to places where no money was to be won or lost, on account of his "damned spasmodic complaints." He might well have spared his strictures on the shortcomings of those who were young enough to be his children.

Fox, to the loss and grief of his country, never reached sixty; but when he was very far short of that age his course of life was already settled and unvaried. During the first decade of the French Revolution all was dark and stormy outside his home. He was excluded from office, with no hope whatsoever of seeing the triumph of the principles for which he combated and suffered. Calumny was his daily portion; while humbler people of the same way of thinking as himself were exposed to peril and oppression from which in spite of his utmost endeavours he could do little to protect them. But within his gardengate all was ordered, equable, serene, and cheerful. His domain was a pretty tableland overlooking the Thames, where it skirts the green and gold of the spacious Chertsey meadow. A love of domesticity, counteracted often until middle age by the charms of pleasure and ambition, grew at last to be his permanent and all-engrossing passion. He grudged every hour that was not spent on St. Anne's Hill, among

his arbours and birds; with Lucretius and Boccaccio, Homer, Dryden, and Cowley, and his wife always at hand to listen as he read or translated them. "Of politics," he wrote when he was five-and-forty, "I am now quite sick, and attend to them only because I think it a duty to do so, and feel that it would be unbecoming my character to quit them at such a moment. Here I am perfectly happy. Idleness, fine weather, Ariosto, a little Spanish, and the constant company of a person whom I love, (I think,) more and more every day and hour, make me as happy as I am capable of being, and much more so than I could hope to be if politics took a different turn."

When that turn showed signs of arriving, Fox was not prepared to greet it. In the spring of 1801 Lord Holland, whom he loved as he would have loved a son, had written to suggest that, as public affairs were looking brighter, his uncle ought to take a house in London. "Never did a letter," was the reply, "arrive in a worse time, my dear young one, than yours this morning; a sweet westerly wind, a beautiful sun, all the thorns and elms just budding, and the nightingales just beginning to sing; though the blackbirds and thrushes would have been quite sufficient to have refuted any arguments in your letter." To watch that young one "going on to fight stoutly in the House of Lords alone;" to walk out shooting, of which as time went forward he became fonder than ever; to correspond with Gilbert Wakefield on nice points of classical scholarship; to entertain old

friends at his own house, and occasionally and somewhat reluctantly to return their visits;—those were pastimes which long ago had driven gaming and r from his favour and out of his habits. For himself asked nothing more, and nothing better, than he but he was sorry for his allies and supporters, baffled their political aspirations, and disappointed of honorable opportunities for active usefulness. He deplored the barbarities which the French Convention perpetrated in the name of liberty. He pitied the victims of cruel, and (even from the ministerial point of view) unnecessary persecution which Dundas promoted, Pitt to the detriment of his fame sanctioned and defended. "The horrors in France," Fox wrote in 1793, "grow every day worse. The transactions at London seem to surpass all their former wickedness. Do you remember Cowper?

'Oh for a lodge in some vast wilderness!'

It is a much more natural wish now than when it was uttered. At home we imitate the French as well as abroad, and, in the trials and sentences of Muir and Paine in particular, I do not think we fall very far short of our original; excepting inasmuch as transportation to Botany Bay is less severe, (and that to a gentleman not much,) than death. You will easily believe I do not acquiesce in this tyranny without an effort, but I am far from sanguine as to success. However, I must do one's duty. Good God! that a man should be sent to Botany Bay for advising another to read Paine!

book, or for reading the Irish Address at a public meeting!"

Those, in his maturer years, were Fox's joys and sorrows. That was what, not very late in life, he became; and such he continued until a calm and noble death closed his story. But at the commencement of 1775 he was still sadly behindhand in respect to the private virtues and proprieties. As a public man, however, he already was formidable by the virility of his powers and the fixity of his purpose. With his immediate object plain before him, he went forth to take his place in a world which was too wise to consider youth a drawback. He was of the age at which, ten years later on, Pitt superseded him in his position as the first public man in Europe, and at which after another ten years Napoleon in his turn superseded Pitt. Of the disadvantages which hampered others, none existed for Fox. He was not, like the Rockinghams, bound by his antecedents to maintain against America an abstract right of taxation, which could not be enforced except by the sword which they thought it a crime to draw. He was not, like Chatham, separated from the majority of the Opposition by mutual dislike and distrust. Fox was quite ready to pull with the Whigs, if only they would do their share of work; and he already was busy in the task of keeping them up to the collar. "I am clear," he wrote to Burke, "that a secession is now totally unadvisable, and that nothing but some very firm and vigorous step will be at all becoming."

By this time many people were looking at where firmness and vigour could be found; for from America had begun to arouse the clamour which worked the hardest, and paid the most, to avert some of the dangers towards which the country was hurried. "The landed interest," so Camden told me before the middle of February, "is almost entirely anti-American, though the common people hold it in abhorrence, and the merchants and traders for obvious reasons are likewise against it." Broughton explained to Mr. Champion, the constituent whom he honoured with his confidence, that if men with private interests had interfered decisively when in the winter the American question became acute, certain measures would most certainly have been adopted. As he said, they were beginning to stir because they began to feel. It so happens that the exact date when the true state of matters was first borne in upon the public mind. A letter from London to a friend in New York, dated the sixth of December 1773, runs as follows: "This day there was a report current that the Congress of the States of America had resolved upon having fixed on stopping all imports into America from Great Britain the first of this month. From that time I strolled upon 'Change, and for the first time saw the face of every American merchant pale with and deep distress in the face of every American merchant. This convinced me of the truth of what I have said before, that the merchants will never

they feel; and everyone knows that the manufacturers will never take the lead of the merchants."*

The public despatches were alarming enough to those who reflected that Governors and Lieutenant-Governors would naturally have put the best face possible on a situation which they themselves had done much to create. But those despatches did not tell the worst. Men could still write freely to each other across the Atlantic; and the advices received by city merchants and bankers were of a complexion to fill everybody, except speculators for a fall, with a feeling nothing short of blank dismay. No official papers from Maryland had been printed, and it might have been supposed that no news was good news as far as that colony was concerned; but before December ended it came to be known that a principal seaport of Maryland had placed itself in line with Boston. When the brig *Peggy Stewart* of London, having on board two thousand pounds "of that detestable weed tea," arrived at Annapolis, Messrs. William and Stewart, to whom the cargo was consigned, put their hands to a paper acknowledging that they had com-

* The style of the letter to New York, with the curious similarity in certain expressions to those employed in the letter to Champion, renders it more than possible that it was written by Burke, who three years before had been appointed agent to the Assembly of New York with a salary of 500*l.* a year. It is true that he despatched a long and very famous epistle from his home in Buckinghamshire on the fifth of December; but he was speaking in the House of Commons that evening, and again on the sixth, and might well have gone on 'Change on the morning of the second day before writing the letter to the gentleman in New York.

mitted an act of most pernicious tendency to the liberties of America. The same gentlemen then went on board the said vessel, with her sails set and colours flying, and voluntarily set fire to the tea. In a few hours the whole freight, and the ship with it, had been consumed by the flames in the presence of a great multitude of spectators. When the letter notifying this transaction to the London correspondents of the unfortunate firm was passing up and down Threadneedle Street, many a warm city man must have felt a shiver go through him. In the same month a Whig nobleman received an account of the warlike preparations in America, written at Philadelphia by General Lee, whose reputation in fashionable military circles lent weight to language which, like himself, was less soldierly than soldatesque. "What devil of a nonsense can instigate any man of General Gage's understanding to concur in bringing about this delusion? I have lately, my Lord, run through almost the whole colonies from the North to the South. I should not be guilty of an exaggeration in asserting that there are 200,000 strong-bodied active yeomanry, ready to encounter all hazards. They are not like the yeomanry of other countries, unarmed and unused to arms. They want nothing but some arrangement, and this they are now bent on establishing. Even this Quaker province is following the example. I was present at a review at Providence in Rhode Island, and really never saw anything more perfect. Unless the *banditti* at Westminster speedily undo everything they

have done, their royal paymaster will hear of reviews and manœuvres not quite so entertaining as those he is presented with in Hyde Park and Wimbledon Common."

The time was too surely approaching when communications addressed from America to gentlemen and noblemen in London would never get further than the secret room in the Post-Office; and colonists who wished for peace hastened, while the avenues were open, to enlighten and admonish those English public men whom they could hope to influence. At the end of 1774 a member of the British Parliament was informed in two letters from Pennsylvania that there were gunsmiths enough in the Province to make one hundred thousand stand of arms in one year, at twenty-eight shillings sterling apiece; that the four New England colonies, together with Virginia and Maryland, were completely armed and disciplined; and that nothing but a total repeal of the Penal Acts could prevent a civil war in America. The writer dealt as freely with large figures as General Lee; but he understood his countrymen better in a case where the merits of that officer were concerned. For the letters went on to explain that the colonies were not so wrapped up in the General's military accomplishments as to give him, when it came to choosing the Commander-in-Chief, a preference over Colonel Putnam and Colonel Washington who had won the trust and admiration of the continent by their talents and achievements. "There are several hundred thou-

sand Americans who would face any danger with these illustrious heroes to lead them. It is to no purpose to attempt to destroy the opposition to the omnipotence of Parliament by taking off our Hancocks, Adamsses, and Dickinsons. Ten thousand patriots of the same stamp stand ready to fill up their places." Dickinson himself writing not to England, but about England, summed up the view of the best and wisest men on his side of the controversy. "I cannot but pity," he said, "a brave and generous nation thus plunged in misfortune by a few worthless persons. Everything may be attributed to the misrepresentations and mistakes of Ministers, and universal peace be established throughout the British world only by the acknowledgement of the truth that half-a-dozen men are fools or knaves. If their character for ability and integrity is to be maintained by wrecking the whole empire, Monsieur Voltaire may write an addition to the chapter on the subject of 'Little things producing great events.'"*

From this time forwards there was a growing disposition in the House of Commons to take America seriously; and there was a man in it determined never again to let the question sleep. On the second of February 1775 the Prime Minister moved an Address to the King, praying his Majesty to adopt effectual measures for suppressing rebellion in the colonies. Later in the evening a member rose who, in the style of solemn

* The extracts given in this and the preceding paragraphs are all from the American Archives.

circumlocution by which the chroniclers of proceedings in Parliament appeared to think that they kept themselves right with the law, was described as "a gentleman who had not long before sate at the Treasury Board, from whence he had been removed for a spirit not sufficiently submissive, and whose abilities were as unquestioned as the spirit for which he suffered."* Fox, (for Fox of course it was,) proposed an amendment deploring that the papers laid upon the table had served only to convince the House that the measures taken by his Majesty's servants tended rather to widen than to heal the unhappy differences between Great Britain and America. That was the turning-point of his own career, and the starting-point for others in a hearty, fearless, and sustained opposition to the policy of the Government. The effect of his oratory is established by various competent authorities, from the official reporter who broke off to remark that Mr. Charles Fox spoke better than usual,** to Walpole, who records in his journals that the young statesman entered into the whole history and argument of the dispute with force and temper, and made the finest figure he had done yet.

But the most lively and convincing testimony is found in a letter written by a great man who on this occasion learned, finally and resignedly, how hard it is even to begin making a great speech. Gibbon had been getting ready for the debate during the whole of

* *The Annual Register for 1775*, chapter v.

** *The Parliamentary History of England*, vol. xviii. page 227.

pronounced the majority "very respectable," as to him, in both senses of the word, it no doubt seemed. So pleased was he that he kindly condoled with his Minister on having been kept out of bed, (which in the case of Lord North was a very different thing from being kept awake,) till so late an hour as three o'clock in the morning.

That Minister, however, was less easily satisfied. He now knew himself to be face to face with a very different opposition from anything which in the existing Parliament he had hitherto encountered. He recognised the quarter from which vitality had been infused into the counsels and procedures of his adversaries. Before a fortnight had elapsed he came down to the House with a Resolution promising in the name of the Commons that any American colony, in which the Assembly consented to vote money for certain stated public purposes, should be exempted from the liability to be taxed by the British Parliament. Every man, in that Parliament and outside it, saw that the plan was specially and carefully framed to meet the argument on which, in his recent speeches, Charles Fox had founded the case that he had so brilliantly advocated. Governor Pownall, who immediately followed North, stated in well-chosen words which no one ventured to contradict that the Resolution was a peace-offering to the young ex-minister.* Such

* "An honourable gentleman, in a late debate, certainly was the first and the only one to hit upon the real jet of the dispute between his country and America. He very ably stated that the reason why

a recognition would have been a high compliment from any man in office to any private member; but when paid by a First Lord of the Treasury to a former subordinate, who had left his Board within the twelvemonth, and had been attacking him ever since, it was a piece of practical adulation which put to a searching and unexpected proof both the strength of conviction and the presence of mind of him to whom it was addressed.

On neither of the two points was Fox unequal to the test. While Pownall was speaking he had time to decide on his line of action, the importance of which he at once discerned. It was his first chance of showing that he possessed the qualities of a true parliamentary leader, who could make the most of a tactical situation without surrendering in the smallest particular his loyalty to a great cause. He commenced his remarks by congratulating the public on the change in the Prime Minister's attitude. The noble Lord, who had been all for violence and war, was treading back in his own footprints towards peace. Now was seen the effect which a firm and spirited opposition never failed to produce. The noble Lord had lent his ear to reason; and, if the minority in that House persevered in supporting the

the colonies objected to the levying taxes for the purpose of a revenue in America was that such revenue took out of the hands of the people that control which every Englishman thinks he ought to have over that government to which his rights and interests are entrusted. The mode of appropriation specified in this resolution takes away the ground of that opposition."—*The Parliamentary History of England*, Feb. 20, 1775.

rights and liberties of the colonies, the process of his conversion would go on apace. He had spoken of the Americans with propriety and discrimination. He had refused to allow that they were rebels; and even to Massachusetts he would gladly open a door through which she might return to her allegiance. He had distinctly stated that Great Britain, dealing as one nation according to diplomatic usage deals with another, had at the outset demanded more than in the end she would insist on exacting; and, once that principle admitted, the noble Lord would be as much inclined on a future day to recede from what he proposed now, as now he was ready to give up that which he had before so strenuously defended. But for the present the noble Lord had not gone far enough. He aimed at standing well with two sets of people whose views were irreconcilable:—the colonists who were resolved, under no conditions, to admit the right of Parliament to tax them; and the supporters of the Government who were equally determined, in every contingency, to assert that right and to exercise it. The noble Lord had wished to content both parties, and he had contented neither. On the countenances of gentlemen opposite the orator, so far as he was able to read them, could descry no symptoms of satisfaction; and the Americans, it was only too certain, must and would reject the offer with disdain.

The speech was marked by the highest art,—that of saying precisely what the speaker thought, in the plainest

language, and without a syllable over. A scene ensued when he resumed his place which was long remembered within the House of Commons, and has occupied a space in English and American histories out of all proportion to its intrinsic consequence, except so far as it discredited the Prime Minister, and established the position and authority of Fox. It was one of those rare moments when a great party, in a tumult of indignant surprise, shakes off the control of those to whom it is accustomed to look for guidance; when the Ministers sit on thorns, or jump up, each in his turn only to confound confusion, and attract on to his own head a share of the impertinences with which the air is swarming; and when an opposition feels itself repaid in the wild joy of a single hour for long years of disappointment and abstinence. North, like much greater men before and after him, experienced the inconvenience of having sprung a policy on his followers and on not a few of his colleagues. The mutiny began at headquarters. Welbore Ellis, a placeman who had already turned his hundredth quarter-day, querulously announced that as a man of honour he felt bound to oppose the Minister; and though North could hardly be called a sick lion, the House hailed with glee an occurrence which bore a strong resemblance to a very familiar fable. Rigby was seen taking notes, and could with difficulty be persuaded to put them back into his pocket; but he did not fail to make his views known to that part of the audience which was the least likely to be gratified by them. An

aside from him was more formidable than an oration from Welbore Ellis; and every Right Honourable Gentleman within earshot on the Treasury bench was obliged to hear how, in Rigby's opinion, the proper persons to move and second Lord North's Resolution were Mr. Otis and Mr. Hancock, of whom the one had been the ring-leader in the agitation against the Stamp Act, and the other had superintended the destruction of the tea. The most violent in the fray was Captain Acland, a cousin by marriage of Charles Fox. He was a young man of fierce manners and dauntless courage, who now was always to the front when sharp words were being exchanged; especially where there was a prospect that on the next morning recourse would be had to yet more pointed weapons. Acland assailed the Government in a style which aroused the wonder even of Chatham; whose standard of the lengths to which a young military man might go when denouncing his elders in the House of Commons had, in the days when he himself was a cornet of horse, been notoriously a generous one.*

The real danger to the Ministry lay in the sulkiness of the King's Friends. These gentlemen, by an unaccountable blunder, had been left without their orders. Having to decide for themselves as to what their em-

* "Lord North was, in the beginning of the day, like a man *exploded*, and the judgment of the House, during about two hours, was that his Lordship was going to be in a considerable minority; Mr. Ellis and others, young Acland in particular, having declared highly and roughly against his desertion of the cause of cruelty."—Chatham to his wife, Feb. 21, 1775.

ployer expected of them, they naturally enough concluded that, as in the parallel case of Rockingham and the repeal of the Stamp-Act, their duty to the King required them to stab his Minister in the back. North had been up five or six times, and matters were looking very black for the Government, when, before it was too late, a deft and able ally came to the rescue. Sir Gilbert Elliot was a politician of account in his own generation, and had ere this been honoured by a message from the King to the effect that he did not take so forward a part in the House of Commons as his abilities warranted. But he needed no one to tell him how to make the most of his remarkable qualities; and he reserved himself for emergencies when a King's Friend who could speak as well as vote was of more value than dozens or scores of silent courtiers.

Gilbert Elliot's political fortunes had gained much, but his posthumous celebrity has suffered not a little, from the unique distinction of his family; for he was the midmost of five eminent men, with the same Christian name and surname, who succeeded each other as father and son. The world, glad to have anything by which to identify him, has remembered him as the writer of a pastoral song admired by Sir Walter Scott. It began with the line, perhaps better known than the rest of the poem

My sheep I neglected, I broke my sheep-hook.

The author of the ditty now proved that he was skilled in the use of that rustic implement. Elliot bluntly

warned the official flock that it was high time to leave off butting at each other, and scampering at large over the country. He contrived to convey something into his manner which suggested to the King's Friends that they were on the wrong scent; as indeed was the case, since the whole business had been arranged beforehand between the Sovereign and the Minister. The storm abated; and Fox, who saw that there had been sufficient of it for his purposes, moved that the Chairman should leave the Chair. A division took place, and there was some cross-voting; for on both sides there were as usual certain of those ingenious senators who please themselves with thinking that they indicate their opinion on the main issue by the course they take on a technical point which is understood by no one outside Parliament, and by fewer within it than is generally believed. And so the business ended, with a twofold result. Fox, in his character of a champion of liberty, had shown himself not less prompt a warrior, and a much more judicious strategist, than in the days when he figured as Lord of Misrule in all the sham tournaments of the House of Commons. And North had been effectually frightened, for some long time to come, out of any inclination to try his hand at the conciliation of America.

The Prime Minister had no desire for a repetition of the lesson which that twentieth of February had taught him. He saw very plainly what his place would have been worth at noon on the twenty-first if the King's

Friends had been correct in thinking that they had the King behind them. So long as North held his present employment there was no demand for the services of his better self; and he returned once more to plod the weary round of coercive legislation. The main occupation of Parliament during that session was a bill for excluding the New England colonies from the principal fishing-grounds within their reach, and notably from the banks of Newfoundland. It was from the cod fishery that the prosperity of those colonies had originally sprung, and by the same industry it was still largely maintained. A sea captain in the early years of the seventeenth century calculated that the charge of equipping a ship of a hundred tons, with eight boats of the sort now called dories on board, was four hundred pounds. "Eight boats with 22 men in a Summer doe usually kill 25,000 fish for every Boat. Sometimes they have taken above 35,000 for a Boat, so that they load not onely their owne Ship, but other spare ships which come thither onely to buy the overplus." This captain went on to explain that the cargo, if taken in the right season to the right market, (which was not "Touloune or Merselus," but England), would sell for 2,250*l*. "At New Plimoth, in Aprill," the writer proceeded, "there is a fish much like a herring that comes up into the small brookes to spawn. After those the Cod also presseth in such plenty, even into the very harbours, that they have caught some in their arms, and hooke them so fast that

three men oft loadeth a Boat of two tuns in two houres.”*

James the First had conferred upon the settlers in New England the exclusive privilege of fishing in North American waters. That concession was justly resented by the English Parliament; but the colonists forbore from enforcing their uttermost rights, and indeed had no occasion for them. They lived and throve by fishing not because they were monopolists; but because they were on the spot; because the best boat-builders in the world, and very far from the worst ship-builders, had their yards at Boston; and because above all they belonged to the right race for the work. And now, when it was proposed for political objects to drive them from the pursuit of their calling, the uneasiness which had begun to pervade the commercial world deepened into consternation. It was vain for the Ministry to hold forth the bait of the spoils of New England, and to evoke patriotic cupidity by the prospect of the three hundred thousand pounds, or the five hundred thousand pounds, which would be transferred yearly from the ship-owners of Salem and Providence to the ship-owners of Poole and Dartmouth. The trained leaders of commerce, who knew the open secrets of solid and profitable business, did not look for information from hack-writers

* The account may be found in “*The Generall Historie of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles*, by Captaine John Smith, London, 1624;” under the head of “Master Dee, his opinion for the building of Ships.”

whose statistics and arguments were dictated to them in Downing Street. The whole life of every English merchant and banker, and of his father and grandfather before him, had been one continuous course of instruction in the present and progressing value of the trade with America. The exports to Pennsylvania alone had increased fifty-fold in less than three-quarters of a century. New England was a large and regular customer, with an enormous current debt owing to British exporters and manufacturers. That custom would be a thing of the past, and those debts could never be recovered, if with the loss of her fishing she lost the means of providing herself with imported goods, and paying for those which she had received already. Nor was it only a question of New England. The colonies, one and all, were on honour to stand and fall together; and, when the cruel and insulting measure now before Parliament was once in the Statute-book, all hope that Congress would drop the non-importation agreement would have to be definitely abandoned.

This time there was little hesitation in the action of the mercantile classes throughout the English-speaking world; and there could be no mistake as to their views, which found a voice in petitions, in deputations, and in evidence proffered at the bar of the Lords. The planters of the Sugar Islands resident in London entreated the House of Commons to stay its hand. As time went on and the news of what was purposed reached the tropics, the Assembly of Jamaica, in the hurry of a well-grounded

panic, drew up and despatched a petition explaining how in their case, with a vast slave population around and among them, the very existence of society would be endangered by the cessation of their traffic with the American colonies. The Society of Friends represented to Parliament the case of Nantucket, an island which lay off the coast of Massachusetts. The population subsisted on the whale fishery, and owned a fleet of one hundred and forty sail. The agricultural produce of Nantucket would hardly support twenty families; but the island contained more than five thousand inhabitants. Nine out of ten among them were Quakers, of whom none were disaffected politicians, and all drank tea to a man. That was a sample of the extent to which the bill would involve opponents, well-wishers and neutrals in one common destruction. The sentiments of the higher commerce, in its central haunt, found expression in an address laid by the Lord Mayor, the Aldermen, and the Liverymen at the foot of the Throne. The occupant of that august seat received their remonstrance in public with marked coldness, and characterised it in private as a new dish of insolence from the shop which had fabricated so many. It was a shop the proprietors of which could not fairly be charged with interfering in matters outside their own province; for the debts due from New England amounted to eight hundred thousand pounds in the City of London alone.

The bill for restraining the trade and commerce of the New England colonies afforded Parliament one more

opening to arrange by policy those difficulties which were rapidly tending towards a solution by the arbitrament of war. That last opportunity was soon a lost one; but the spokesmen of the minority comported themselves in a manner worthy of the supreme occasion, and of the great assembly to which they belonged. It was a question precisely suited to the genius of Burke. The final series of appeals in which he exhorted the House of Commons to settle the American controversy by light and right, before it came to a contest of might, showed more than his usual power of mastering the details of trade and finance, and converting them into oratory for the instruction of his audience, and into literature for the admiration of posterity. As member for Bristol he was bound to do his utmost in the interests of commerce; and his constituents, the best of whom were not undeserving of such a representative, had supplied him with fresh stores of facts and calculations in addition to those which he possessed already. His speaking had never been more rich in the fruit, and more sparing in the flowers; and he had his reward in the close and respectful attention of hearers uneasily conscious that the fate of the empire was slipping out of their grasp, and that an impulse had been given to it which might carry it far in the wrong direction.

Burke's exertions were supported and supplemented by Fox with an abundance, but no superfluity, of that straightforward and unlaboured declamation which, from his earliest to his latest speech, always commanded the

ear, and never offended the taste of the House of Commons. With headlong but sure-handed energy of delineation he sketched out the broad lines of statesmanship, and filled them in with the special circumstances of the situation. His warning against the folly of presenting all Americans, whatever might be their political sympathies, with the alternative of starvation or rebellion, impressed his listeners by its force and directness, and received striking confirmation at the critical moments of the war. On three several occasions the fate of a campaign was largely influenced by those very fishermen who had been driven wholesale from their employment into the ranks of Washington's army. The enthusiasm, the intrepidity, and the professional skill of the mariners who served in the New England regiments enabled their general to deprive the British garrison of the supplies which abounded on the islands in Boston Harbour; to accomplish the retirement from the lines of Brooklyn which averted what otherwise must have been a crowning disaster; and to effect that crossing of the Delaware on a mid-winter midnight which secured for him the most sorely wanted of all his successes. The loyalist poets amused themselves by describing how

Priests, tailors, and cobblers fill with heroes the camp,
And sailors, like craw-fish, crawl out of each swamp.

But, as a matter of history, those sailors had walked ashore in a very dangerous temper from the fishing vessels which, in consequence of the action of Parlia-

ment, were lying useless alongside the quays of every town and village on the seaboard of New England.*

Fox's argument, roughly and insufficiently reported, has not come down to us in the shape for insertion in a handbook of oratorical extracts. But it has the stamp of a speech hot from the heart, spoken by a man who thought only of convincing or confuting those who heard him, without caring how his words would read on the next morning or in another century. "You have now," said Fox, "completed the system of your folly. You had some friends yet left in New England. You yourselves made a parade of the number you had there. But you have not treated them like friends. How must they feel, what must they think, when the people against whom they have stood out in support of your measures say to them; 'You see now what friends in England you have depended upon. They separated you from your real friends, while they hoped to ruin us by it; but since they cannot destroy us without mixing you in the common carnage, your merits to them will not now save you. You are to be starved indiscriminately with us. You are treated in common with us as rebels, whether you rebel or not. Your loyalty has ruined you. Rebellion alone, if resistance is rebellion, can save you from famine and ruin.' When these things are said to them, what can they answer?"

The opposite view to that held by Fox and Burke did not suffer for want of being boldly stated. A recent

* The verse is quoted in Tyler's *Literary History*.

addition to the notabilities of Parliament had been made in the person of Henry Dundas, now Lord Advocate for Scotland, who very soon gave indication of those qualities which were to win for him his considerable future and his unenviable fame. He entered on his career in the House of Commons with the advantage of having early in life played leading parts on a narrower stage. He had been Solicitor-General in the Court of Session of Edinburgh at four-and-twenty; and had learned to debate, if he had learned nothing else there for his profit, in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. Tall and manly,—with a marked national accent of which, unlike Wedderburn, he had the good sense not to be ashamed,—his look and bearing betokened indefatigable powers and a dominant nature. His face showed evident marks of his having been a hearty fellow, for which a convivial generation liked him none the less; especially when they came to find that his speeches had other things about them which were broad besides their Scotch.* Those who followed him closely might hope to carry away what passed for a good story after dinner, in circles which were not fastidious. Dundas now took upon himself to defend the

* Omond's *Lord Advocates of Scotland*: Chapter xiv. Boswell, who had his personal jealousies, and his own political ambitions outside the Scotch Bar, was greatly exercised when Dundas began to play a part in London. He called the new Minister "a coarse dog." The specimen of Dundas's humour referred to by Mr. Omond, and reported in the 20th volume of the *Parliamentary History*, is not so much coarse as revolting.

ministerial proposal against the strictures of Charles Fox. The measure, he said, was not sanguinary; and as for the famine which was so pathetically lamented, his only fear was that the Act would fail to produce it. Though prevented from fishing in the sea, the New Englanders had fish in their rivers; and though their country was not fit to grow wheat, they had a grain of their own, their Indian corn, on which they could subsist full as well as they deserved.

Such was the man who, when he was twenty years older, and neither more nor less unfeeling, had at his absolute disposal the liberties of Scotland, and the lives and fortunes of all who loved those liberties too ardently for their own safety. On the present occasion Dundas had gone further in his self-revelation than was pleasing to a House of Commons not yet accustomed to him and his ways. Lord John Cavendish, speaking amidst general sympathy, gravely rebuked the Minister who had uttered sentiments which would have been shocking even in the mouth of a parliamentary buffoon; and Burke followed up the attack in plain vernacular suited to the character of the offence which he was chastising. Nothing, he said, could be more foolish, more cruel, and more insulting than to hold out as a resource to the starving fishermen ship-builders and ship-carpenters who would be ruined by the Act that, after the plenty of the Ocean, they might poke in the brooks and rake in the puddles, and diet on what Englishmen considered as husks and draff for hogs. The friends of the Govern-

ment who had been too apt, as Horace Walpole said, to treat the Americans in the spirit of a mob ducking a pickpocket, were ashamed at seeing their own worst features distorted in that brazen mirror. The Lord Advocate in vain attempted to extenuate, to explain and, if possible, to excuse his conduct. Even the majority had had enough of him; and the only acceptable sentence of his second speech was that in which he announced that he should bow to the disposition of the House, and say no more.

It was time that an example should be made. Sandwich and Rigby were the two Ministers whose words went for most, because it was notorious that they ruled the Government. As if by concert between themselves, they now adopted a tone of forced and studied insolence with reference to the colonists. One would think, Rigby said in the House of Commons, that the Americans were otters and ate nothing but fish. As to the notion, of which so much had been heard, that they might find courage in despair, it was an idea thrown out to frighten women and children. They had not amongst them the military prowess of a militia drummer. The Earl of Sandwich descanted on the same theme in the House of Lords. What did it signify, he asked, if the colonies abounded in men, so long as they were raw, undisciplined, and cowardly? For his own part he wished that they would put into the field not forty thousand, but two hundred thousand, so-called soldiers; as the greater their numbers, the easier would be the

conquest. And then he proceeded to tell the peers an anecdote which he professed to have got from Sir Peter Warren. He related at considerable length, and with infinite gusto, how at the siege of Louisburg in 1745 the Americans had been placed in the front of the army; how they had shown much elation at the honour which had been conferred upon them, though they boasted that it was no more than their due; how they all ran away when the first shot was fired; how Sir Peter then posted them in the rear, and told them that it was the custom of generals to preserve their best troops to the last, especially among the ancient Romans, who were the only nation that ever resembled the Americans in courage and patriotism.

The story was a lie, on the face of it. No man with a grain of knowledge about military affairs would have believed it for a moment; and no man of honour would have repeated it without believing it, even if he were not a responsible Minister addressing Parliament. By putting it into the mouth of a British Admiral Sandwich insulted not only the Americans, but the honest and generous service over which he unworthily presided. The speech was a poor compliment to the gratitude, or else to the information, of the peers; for it was known and acknowledged that the land-force employed in those operations which resulted in the first capture of Louisburg had been levied in New England, and had behaved to admiration.* The Lords resented the language

* Parkman says in the first chapter of his *Montcalm and Wolfe*:

which Sandwich had addressed to them. The Earl of Suffolk, Secretary of State though he was, took his colleague of the Admiralty roundly to task; and sixteen peers, in the Protest which they entered on the Journals, recorded their opinion that the topic so much insisted upon by a lord high in office, namely the cowardice of his Majesty's American subjects, had no weight in itself as an argument for the bill, and was not at all agreeable to the dignity of sentiment which ought to characterise their House.

These taunts, directed against a people as high-mettled as our own, and more acutely alive to what was said and thought about them, exercised on the martial spirit of the colonists the same effect as Wedderburn's speech before the Privy Council had produced on their political sensibilities. The records of America during

"New England had borne the heaviest brunt of the preceding wars. Having no trained officers, and no disciplined soldiers, and being too poor to maintain either, she borrowed her warriors from the workshop and the plough, and officered them with lawyers, merchants, mechanics, and farmers. To compare them with good regular troops would be folly; but they did, on the whole, better than could have been expected, and in the last war achieved the brilliant success of the capture of Louisburg." The exploit, Parkman goes on to say, was owing partly to good luck, and partly to native hardihood.

Captain Mahan writes: "The most solid success, the capture of Cape Breton Island in 1745, was achieved by the colonial forces of New England, to which indeed the royal navy lent valuable aid, for to troops so situated the fleet is the one line of communication." Lord Stanhope, in his History, attributes the taking of Louisburg to the people of New England. "For their commander they chose Mr. Pepperel, a private gentleman, in whom courage and sagacity supplied the place of military skill."

the next two years indicate on every page how many recruits of the choicest sort were impelled into her armies by the determination that such a reproach should not be justified. Her national literature throughout the next generation proves that the memory rankled long after the veterans who survived the war had gone back to the stack-yard and the counting-house. Unfortunately no one intervened in the debates who, with the authority of personal experience, could testify to the real value of the colonial militiamen. Those great soldiers, who had served with them in the field, were in retirement or in the grave. Chatham, who owed them so large a debt, was prevented by ill health from coming down to the House of Lords in order to abash their detractors. From his sick-chamber he wistfully and critically watched all that was passing, and he was not left without his consolations. The Marquis of Granby, before he came of age, had been returned as member for the University of Cambridge for the sake of the hero whose noble portrait, as he stands by his charger, lights up the Great Combination Room of Trinity College with life and colour. The son was resolved that, as far as he could speak for his dead father, something should be heard even at second hand from one who had learned to be a judge of courage amid scenes very different from those with which the Bedfords were familiar. Breaking silence for the first time, he followed Rigby with a fine vindication of the colonists, and a happily expressed tribute to the Minister who had made use of their valour for the pro-

tection and enlargement of the Empire. His reward was a letter dictated by Chatham, exquisite in feeling, and containing words of praise which, coming from such a quarter, would do more than volumes of good advice to turn a young man into the right path.*

It may be observed with satisfaction that the chorus of calumny was swelled by no one with soldierly antecedents, or with the making of a soldier in him. Captain Acland, who was much too ready to inform Parliament that he cordially disliked the people of Massachusetts, always spoke of their military qualities with decency and even with respect. The time was not far distant when he learned the whole truth about the fighting value of New Englanders. After the last of a succession of hot engagements, in all of which he had shown daring and skill, he was picked up desperately wounded, well within the American lines. And, while he was still a prisoner, his services to his country were cut short in a duel with a brother officer who had sneered in his presence at the military character of those colonists whom, brave as he was, Acland knew to be no less brave than himself.

* Chatham to Granby, April 7; 1775: from a draft in Lady Chatham's handwriting.

CHAPTER VIII.

HOSTILITIES BECOME IMMINENT. LEXINGTON.

RIGBY had told the House of Commons that, if the Acts against which Congress protested were repealed, the seat of the Empire would henceforward be at Philadelphia; and he recommended gentlemen ambitious of a career to transfer themselves to that capital, and enjoy the honour of consorting with Dr. Franklin. For the great American had now started on his way back across the ocean; though it was no fault of Rigby that he was not still in London, and in very uncomfortable quarters. If by the publication of Hutchinson's letters Franklin contributed to embroil the relations between England and the colonies, he had abundantly expiated his own error, and had done his best to redeem the errors of others. His existence during the last fourteen months had been one long penance, which he endured manfully and patiently because he was conscious that he, and he alone, possessed in combination the knowledge, position, character and capacity indispensable to anyone who aspired to bring the last faint chance of peace to a successful issue. On the day after the scene in the Privy Council Office he had been dismissed from

his Postmastership; and of his own accord he dispensed himself from all diplomatic ceremonies, keeping aloof from levees, and abstaining from direct and ostensible intercourse with Cabinet Ministers the most powerful among whom made no secret of their opinion that the proper residence for him was the inside of Newgate. Meanwhile his wife, to whom he had been happily married forty-four years, and from whom he had been parted for ten, was dying at home in Pennsylvania; and he never saw her again. But at no time in his life was his society so eagerly courted by such eminent men, for the promotion of such momentous objects. Chatham, (whom Franklin had once found unapproachable, but who, as is the case with strong and haughty but generous natures, had grown mild and mellow with years,) secured him as a guest in Kent, called on him at his lodgings in a street off the Strand, and took care to be seen paying him marked attention in public. In the House of Lords the old statesman, with characteristic ignorance of the non-essential, took Franklin to the space before the throne, which is reserved for Privy Councillors and the eldest sons of peers. On learning his mistake he limped back to the outer Bar, and commended his friend to the care of the door-keepers in accents which all might hear.

Lord Howe, now a Rear Admiral, who if hostilities broke out was sure of an important command, honoured himself by an endeavour to avert a war which could not fail to bring him wealth, however small might be

the opportunity for acquiring glory. He commissioned his sister to challenge Franklin to a trial of skill at chess, and contrived to be within call on an evening when the invitation had been accepted.* Lord Howe, in the phrase of the day, opened himself freely to his new acquaintance on the alarming situation of affairs, and put him into communication with Lord Hyde, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster; and Lord Hyde, as was well understood all round, meant Lord Dartmouth. The Secretary for the Colonies would have given his salary, many times told, to prevent bloodshed; though in the last resort he could not induce himself to thwart, or even to contradict, a master towards whom he entertained a true attachment, and who esteemed him as he deserved. For George the Third was at his very best when exchanging ideas with Dartmouth for any other purpose than that of harrying him into harrying the Americans. "If the first of duties," (so the monarch wrote to the Minister in July 1773,) "that to God, is not known, I fear no other can be expected; and as to the fashionable word 'honour,' that will never alone guide a man farther than to preserve appearance. I will not add more; for I know I am writing to a true believer; one who shows by his actions that he is not governed by the greatest of tyrants, Fashion." Not long afterwards his Majesty asked Dr. Beattie what he thought of Lord Dartmouth, and the author of the Essay on

* Franklin's *Account of Negotiations in London for effecting a Reconciliation between Great Britain and the American Colonies.*

Truth responded with effusion which bordered on the fulsome. The King, who spoke and wrote a style greatly preferable to that of some among his subjects who had most pleased the literary taste of the hour, smiled and said; "Dr. Beattie, you are perfectly right. I think precisely the same of him myself. He is certainly a most excellent man."

An unofficial negotiation for settling the difficulties between Great Britain and the colonies was set on foot forthwith. The details were conducted by Franklin in concert with two of those Englishmen of the middle class who, if a chance was given them, were able and willing to employ upon the business of the nation the same diligence and sagacity with which they had long managed their own. Mr. Barclay was a well-known member of the Society of Friends, as likewise was his colleague Dr. Fothergill; a physician with a great London practice, and a Natural Historian of remarkable distinction. Their deliberations took shape in a document called by the modest name of a "Paper of Hints for Conversation." In truth it was the draft of a treaty which, if it had been approved, signed, and ratified, would have had a merit rare among the celebrated instruments in history; —that of terminating a sharp and extended controversy rationally, equitably, permanently, and without derogation to the self-esteem of either of the contracting parties. A copy of the proposed Articles had been in Dartmouth's hands, and he expressed himself about them hopefully and favourably in private. On the first of February 1775

Chatham presented to Parliament a bill for settling the troubles in America, and the Secretary for the Colonies begged their Lordships not to kill the measure by an immediate vote, but to let it lie on the table until it had received their careful and respectful consideration. In his sincere desire to do his duty according to the light of his own understanding Dartmouth had for a moment forgotten the terrors of the Bedfords. Sandwich, who suspected that peace was in the crucible, knew only too well that premature publicity may be as discomfoting to those who are planning good as to those who are plotting evil. He chose his moment with a sinister address worthy of the orator who turned the debate in the Second Book of "Paradise Lost." Looking full and hard at Franklin, who was leaning over the Bar, Sandwich exclaimed that he had in his eye the person who drew up the proposals which were under discussion,—one of the bitterest and most mischievous enemies whom England had ever known. Chatham hastened to interpose the shield of his eloquence for the protection of one who might not speak for himself within those walls; but Franklin was not the quarry at whom Sandwich aimed. The shaft had gone home to the breast towards which it was really levelled. Dartmouth rose once more, and said that he could not press a course which evidently was unacceptable to their Lordships, and that he himself would give his voice for rejecting the bill forthwith.

The scheme of reconciliation, which promised so

fairly, had received its deathblow. Franklin, who was determined to leave no device untried, offered to pay the East India Company for their tea on the security of his private fortune, and (he might have added) at the risk of his popularity among his own countrymen. Mr. Barclay on the other hand, in his honest eagerness to save the irretrievable, hinted that, if the representative of America would show himself sufficiently easy to deal with, he might expect not only to be reinstated in the Postmastership which he had lost, but to get any place under Government that he cared to ask for. Franklin, more offended than he chose to show, replied that the only place the Ministry would willingly give him was a place in a cart to Tyburn, but that he would do his utmost without any other inducement than the wish to be serviceable. The proceedings of the conference trickled on for a few weeks, and then ended in a marsh; as must always be the case where the agents on either of the two sides are not their own masters, but have those behind them who intend the negotiations to fail. By the middle of March Dr. Fothergill sadly admitted that the pretence of an accommodation was specious, but altogether hollow; and that the great folks whom he was in the habit of attending as patients had all along regarded the colonies as nothing better than "a larger field on which to fatten a herd of worthless parasites." Some days afterwards Franklin sailed for Philadelphia, and beguiled a protracted voyage by drawing up an account of the doleful transactions on which

he had been recently engaged, and by the more profitable and congenial occupation of testing with his thermometer the breadth and the direction of the Gulf Stream.

After a short interval he was followed across the Atlantic by emissaries the colour of whose coats showed that the day of grace was past. The affairs of America were in a tangle which the King and his Ministers had neither the will nor the wit to unravel. The knot was now for the sword to cut, and they looked around them for a man who had the skill of his weapon. Clive, and his old chief Lawrence, had died within the last few months. Granby had fought in the best British fashion at the head of a British contingent as large as a formidable army; and Wolfe had done miracles with smaller numbers. But they both had gone, leaving nothing except their example. Albemarle too was dead, who as general of the land forces in the West Indies had shared with the navy in the undoubted honour and the vast profit which accrued from the conquest of Havanna. As an officer who had been tried in a supreme command there remained Sir Jeffrey Amherst. He had won his laurels in America, where he had gained the character of a cautious and sound strategist. His name stood high among the colonists, who had formed half of the very considerable body of troops which he was careful to gather around him before he opened a campaign; whom he had treated handsomely; and to whose co-

operation he gratefully attributed an ample portion of the credit of his victory.

The judgment of New Englanders on their rulers, when newspapers were few and cautious, was to be found in their sermons, which never flattered those whom the preacher and his hearers did not love. When Montreal fell in the autumn of 1760, the pulpits rang with the praises of "the intrepid, the serene, the successful Amherst." The pastor of Brookfield, who had been a chaplain in a Massachusetts regiment, (and American military chaplains generally contrived to smell whatever powder was being burned,) after hailing the downfall of the Canadian Babylon, broke out into praises of Amherst the renowned general, worthy of that most honourable of all titles, the Christian hero; who loved his enemies, and while he subdued them, made them happy. Amherst had indeed endeavoured to infuse some chivalry and humanity into the rude and often horrible warfare of the backwoods; and his severities, sharp enough on occasion, were necessitated by the hideous cruelties which the Indian allies of France inflicted upon the farming population of the English border.

Amherst had proved himself a stout warrior elsewhere than in the field. In the year 1768 he had been in collision with the King over a matter about which neither was in the right; and the General had come off with flying colours and abundance of spoil. A Court favourite had been nominated to a post which Amherst held, but the work of which he did not do. In his

wrath he threw up all his functions and appointments, and aroused such a commotion in the political and military world that he had to be coaxed back at any sacrifice. He returned to the official ranks stronger, and better endowed with public money, than ever; and neither minister nor monarch ventured to disturb him again. By January 1775 George the Third had reconsidered the favourable opinion which he had formed of General Gage, and now declared him wanting in activity and decision. He proposed to confer upon Amherst the command of the troops in America, together with a commission to use his well-known influence and popularity among the colonists for the purpose of inducing them to make their peace before recourse was had to arms. Gage meanwhile, by an arrangement in which the taxpayer was the last person thought of, was to continue Governor of Massachusetts, and to draw his pay as Commander in Chief. George the Third undertook in person the task of appealing to Amherst's loyalty, which he endeavoured further to stimulate by the offer of a peerage. In the disagreeable and disastrous war which was now at hand, titles were of use rather for the purpose of tempting men into active service, than of rewarding them when they returned from it. The veteran stated very plainly that he could not bring himself to serve against the Americans, "to whom he had been so much obliged." The King, with sincere regret, informed Dartmouth that Amherst could not be persuaded. It only remained, he said, to do the next best; to leave

the command with Gage, and send to his assistance the ablest generals that could be thought of.

The choice of those generals was not an act of favouritism. George the Third, as long as he continued to transact public business, looked closely into all high military appointments which involved grave military responsibilities. His judgment was excellent save when as in the case of the Duke of York it was misled by considerations of family interest and of strong affection. Determined to have his armies well commanded, he set aside his personal inclinations and overcame his political prejudices. In time of peace and war alike, even when he was told that the salvation of the country depended on it, no importunity from a Cabinet which required strengthening could prevail on him to employ a statesman whom he regarded as an opponent. And between one war and another he was far from overlooking political considerations in his treatment of the army and the navy. Whenever a veteran scarred with wounds, and honoured throughout the whole service, ventured to give a vote displeasing to the King, he was harshly received at Court and ruthlessly deprived of the rewards which his valour had earned. But when hostilities broke out, if a famous soldier or sailor who had been wronged and slighted had any fight left in him, George the Third did not fail to display what moralists class as the rarest form of magnanimity,—that of overlooking the injuries which he himself had inflicted.

Ingratitude during peace, alternating with a tardy

recognition of merit under the pressure of war, up to the very last marked George the Third's dealings with great soldiers whose politics displeased him. Sir John Moore complained that he was treated as a "bad subject" by the King, for whom he had been wounded five times, and the discipline and efficiency of whose army he had done more than any living man to restore. At length, when he was wanted for the chief command in Spain, George the Third "very graciously," and it must be owned very frankly, said that a stop must be put to persecution, and that Sir John Moore "must not be plagued any more." Lord Lynedoch had been nothing but a Whig country gentleman till he was five-and-forty; and a Whig country gentleman he remained until he died at ninety-five with a military reputation second only to that of Wellington. He was even worse used than his friend and patron Sir John Moore; for the King angrily refused to give him army-rank. His Majesty quarrelled even with Lord Melville when that statesman protested against the treatment to which so distinguished an officer was exposed, and was quite prepared to quarrel over the same matter with Pitt. After Corunna, when such a sword as Graham's could not be suffered to remain idle, he at length received his due, and was sent as Wellington's right-hand man to the Peninsula, where he won Barossa and helped to win Vittoria.*

Chief among the three Major-Generals selected to serve in America in the spring of 1775 was William

* Delavoye's *Life of Lord Lynedoch*, pages 269, 262, 249, 250.

Howe, brother of the Admiral and of the Lord Howe who fell at Ticonderoga in the year 1758. That nobleman, who was an Irish viscount, had been member for Nottingham. When the news of his death reached England, his mother in pathetic terms urged the people of the city which her son had represented to replace him by his younger brother, who himself was then at the front with his regiment. So William Howe was nominated and chosen, and had sate for Nottingham ever since. At the general election of 1774 he told his constituents that the whole British army together would not be numerous enough to conquer America, and assured them that, if he were offered a command against the colonists, he would not scruple to refuse it. The King who knew him as a splendid officer, the discipline of whose battalion had been a model, and whose gallantry was a proverb, was himself courageous enough to take the risk of a rebuff. When invited to sail for America, Howe inquired whether he was to consider the message as a request or an order; and on being informed that it was an order he obeyed it. He came back before the end of the Parliament, with a reputation for every military quality, except that of coolness under fire, sadly impaired,—to find at the next election that the freemen of Nottingham had good memories, and a different view of his personal obligations from that which he himself had held.

The next of the three was John Burgoyne. He had gone through the usual experiences of a distinguished

military man who was likewise a politician. He had been thanked in his seat in Parliament; he had received the governorship of a fortress in marked and special recognition of his brilliant valour; and he had been the subject of a letter in which the King told the Prime Minister that, if Colonel Burgoyne had not been prudent enough to vote for the Royal Marriage Bill, his Majesty would certainly have taken that governorship away. Burgoyne's sentiments towards the Colonists were friendly, but his view of the legal and constitutional aspect of the controversy was not favourable to their claims. He agreed to serve against them without compunction, though he missed that sense of exhilaration which he had hitherto felt whenever he had gone to meet the enemy. He confessed his lack of enthusiasm to his Sovereign in a letter not unbecoming a soldier, but too long and too laboured, like all which Burgoyne ever wrote even under circumstances calculated to prune and chasten the most copious and flowery style.

The third Major-General was Henry Clinton, who had learned his trade under Prince Ferdinand during the Seven Years War, and who now was member for Newark and a supporter of the Ministry. The dash and dexterity with which these officers, one and all, had seized their opportunities, in America, in Portugal, or in Germany, fully justified the King in his hope that they would be equal to larger enterprises; and the public opinion of the army confirmed his choice. The connection between war and politics, in the aristocratic England of four genera-

tions ago, was not less close than in the great days of ancient Rome. Then the scion of a consular family courted the suffrages of the people in order that he might go forth to command their legions, and returned to the senate from Spain, or Gaul, or Pontus to be congratulated if he had triumphed, or to defend himself in case things had gone badly with him in the field. The three Major-Generals were all members of parliament, and all remained members while year after year they were campaigning and administering thousands of miles away from Westminster. After the frightful miscarriages which befell them personally, or which had taken place under their auspices, they all resumed their seats on their accustomed bench in the House of Commons as naturally and quietly as if they had come back from a week of partridge-shooting.

The expedient adopted was singularly unfortunate. If any one of the three had been invested with the command-in-chief, he would for the sake of his own reputation have applied to the War Office for as many regiments as could be spared from home duties; and, being on the spot, he would have made his representations felt. But no Ministry will press upon an absent general larger means and appliances than those which he insists on having. Gage was the author of the pleasant theory that the military side of the difficulty would prove to be a very small matter. He now had begun to be alarmed, and wrote in vague terms about the necessity of being provided with "a very respectable

force." But during his recent visit to England, speaking as a soldier who knew the colonies and who was responsible for keeping them, he had set going a notion that the Americans were unwarlike as a community, and pusillanimous as individuals. That agreeable and convenient idea had been eagerly caught up by the noisiest members of the Government, and had been employed by them in public as an argument against those who condemned their policy as hazardous. They had assured Parliament that a course of coercion would be effective, safe, and the very reverse of costly; and this they had done on Gage's authority. He had named a limited number of additional battalions as the outside which he would require in order to complete the business; and those battalions he should have, and not a musket more. The reinforcements which accompanied Howe and Burgoyne across the sea brought up the garrison at Boston to ten thousand men. It was an army powerful enough to inspire all the colonies with alarm for their independence, and so burdensome as to irritate Massachusetts beyond endurance. But it was utterly inadequate to the task of holding down New England, and ludicrously insufficient for the enterprise of conquering, and afterwards controlling, America. When the war had endured a twelvemonth David Hume,—who had lived through a very great period of our history, and had written almost all the rest of it,—pronounced that the show of statesmen in power, and generals and admirals in command, had up to that point been the poorest ever known in the

annals of the country. Of those generals Gage was the first, and perhaps the worst; and in his combined quality of civil administrator, military leader, and above all of adviser to the Government in London, he played, for a very small man, a material and prominent part in the preparation of an immense catastrophe.

A Governor who was bound by statute to destroy the liberties of his province, and ruin the prosperity of its capital, had a very narrow margin within which he could display himself as a beneficent ruler. But there were two ways of discharging even such a commission. Obligated to punish, Gage should have avoided the appearance of enjoying the work on which he was employed unless he was prepared to abandon the hope of ultimately playing the peacemaker; and that function was one among the many which he was called upon to fulfil. He had been confidentially instructed by the King to "insinuate to New York and such other colonies as were not guided by the madness of the times," proposals which might entice them back to due obedience, without putting "the dagger to their throats."* The General had already tried his hand at pacification. In October 1774 he wrote to the President of the Congress at Philadelphia congratulating him on his endeavours after a cordial reconciliation with the mother-country, and promising his own services as a mediator.** He might

* George the Third to Dartmouth: Jan. 31, 1775.

** *Historical Manuscripts Commission*; Fourteenth Report; Appendix, Part x.

have spared his fine phrases; for he was the last man whose arbitration or intervention would have been accepted by any New Englander endowed with a grain of local patriotism. By making public reference to a hackneyed and offensive taunt he had done that which private persons seldom forgive, and communities never. To be called a saint by the unsaint-like is a form of canonisation which nowhere is held to be a compliment; and just now there was something too much of it in Boston. "The inhabitants of this colony," wrote an officer, "with the most austere show of devotion are void of every principle of religion or common honesty, and reckoned the most arrant cheats and hypocrites in America." That was the creed of the barracks; and Gage paid it the homage of a joke such as a parcel of subalterns might have concocted after mess, and been ashamed of long before the eldest of them had got his company. When Massachusetts, threatened in her liberties and her commerce, bowed her head, (though not in fear,) and set aside a day for prayer and fasting, he inflicted a deliberate and official insult on the people whom he governed by issuing a proclamation against Hypocrisy. Having thus paralysed for ever and a day his power of acting as an intercessor between the Crown and the colony, he informed the Cabinet that, public feeling in America being what it was, the penal Acts could not be enforced, and had much better be suspended.

Such a recommendation from the very man whose sanguine assurances had decoyed the Government into

what he himself now confessed to be a Slough of Despond, was described by the King with pardonable impatience as "the most absurd course that could possibly be suggested." But whatever might be the quarter whence it emanated, the advice came on the top of tidings which foretold that a river of blood would be set flowing unless it was acted upon without delay. The cannon and stores of the Massachusetts Militia were kept at and near Cambridge. Gage now learned the ominous circumstance that the several townships of the province had begun quietly to withdraw their share of the ammunition. On the first of September 1774 before sunrise, he despatched an expedition from Boston, by road and river, which took possession of a couple of field pieces and two hundred and fifty kegs of powder, and lodged them securely behind the ramparts of the Castle. The performance was smart, and the most was made of it, not so much by the vanity of the author as by the apprehensions of those against whom it had been projected. The truth was spread all over Middlesex county in a few hours. It ran through the New England colonies with the speed and the growing dimensions of a rumour; and, by the time it got to New York and Philadelphia, good patriots professed to know for certain that a British man-of-war had fired on the people and had killed six of them at the first shot. In some such shape the news reached London; and all the friends and all the foes of America believed that Gage had made good his boasts and his promises, and that the colonists, at the first

glint of a bayonet, had indeed proved themselves such as Rigby and Sandwich had represented them.

Charles Fox expressed his thoughts to Edmund Burke in a letter which has been quoted ere now in condemnation of them both, but which proves nothing worse than that the patriotism of the two statesmen embraced their fellow-countrymen on both sides of the Atlantic. "Though your opinions," Fox wrote, "have turned out to be but too true, I am sure you will be far enough from triumphing in your foresight. What a melancholy consideration for all thinking men that no people, animated by what principle soever, can make a successful resistance to military discipline! I do not know that I was ever so affected with any public event, either in history or life. The introduction of great standing armies into Europe has then made all mankind irrevocably slaves!" The consideration which most depressed him was "the sad figure which *men* made against *soldiers*." Fox's remarks, however, were based on a curious and total misapprehension of the facts. As fast as the report of the seizure of the powder travelled up and down the coast and among the inland villages, the neighbours flocked to each centre of resort, and remained together throughout the night. Next morning many thousand people converged on Cambridge. They arrived with sticks and without fire-arms; as citizens, and not as militia; under the command of a Selectman of their township or a member of their Committee of Correspondence. The General had taken a step implying

war; and they, as civilians, had come for the grave purpose of doing that which meant revolution. Oliver, the Lieutenant-Governor of the province, who resided at Cambridge, had gone into Boston for the purpose of entreating Gage to keep his troops within their barracks. The distance to and fro between the two towns was only what a sophomore of Harvard College would cover for his daily exercise between lecture and chapel. But Oliver who knew his countrymen as one who feared them, and Joseph Warren as one who loved and led them, were agreed in their opinion that, if a detachment marched, it would never find its way back to Boston.

It was Oliver whom the people sought, and they waited with full knowledge of the purpose for which they wanted him. They kept their hand in during his absence by taking pledges of renunciation of office from a High Sheriff, and two Mandamus Councillors. When the Lieutenant-Governor came back with what he intended to be the welcome announcement that no armed force was on the road from Boston, they requested him formally to resign his post; and after some gasconading on his part, which they endured very stolidly, he acceded to their desire. Then, standing closely packed beneath the rays of the hottest sun which had shone during that summer, they began like true Americans to pass Resolutions; acknowledging that Gage, when he removed the powder, had not violated the constitution; and voting unanimously their abhorrence of mobs and riots, and of

the destruction of private property. The British General in anxious self-defence wrote to the Ministry at home that they were no town rabble, but the freeholders and farmers of the county. Guided by their own good sense, and by the advisers on whom they had been accustomed to rely in the ordinary transaction of civil business, they exhibited a firmness combined with moderation which reassured those who, with Charles Fox, expected little from the behaviour of *men* when placed in opposition to *soldiers*. Soldiers, however, within a few days, and not many hours, they might have had in abundance; for the contingents from the more distant regions, where the alarm was greater and the exasperation not less, came armed and in martial array. Israel Putnam, his deeper feelings touched to the quick by the loss of the material for so many good cartridges, took upon himself to call out the militia of Connecticut, and sent the fiery cross far and wide over the continent. Twenty thousand musketeers were already on foot, with their faces towards the mouth of the Charles River, when they were turned back by expresses from Boston bearing the intelligence that for the present everything was well over. Putnam, proud of the result, if only half pleased at the ease with which it had been attained, replied by an assurance that, but for the counter orders, double the force would have been on the move in another twenty-four hours. And he took the opportunity of giving the people of Massachusetts an admonition, (the more mundane part of which he evidently thought that they needed,) to

put their trust in God and mind to keep their powder safe.*

The Boston patriots were never again caught napping; and they very soon commenced a system of reprisals, or rather of depredations on their own property, which kept both the garrison and the squadron awake. One night, within hearing of the nearest man-of-war, if only the officer of the watch had known what they were about, they withdrew the cannon from a battery at Charlestown, which commanded the entrance of the inner harbour. Another night they removed four pieces which were stored in the neighbourhood of the Common. Their audacity and ubiquity were so bewildering that Admiral Graves, who now was conducting the blockade, could think of no better expedient than that of spiking the guns which, from the North point of the city, bore upon the roadstead where his ships were lying. At other seaports, to which the royal navy was only an occasional visitor, the inhabitants were still more free to act; and in laying hands on what belonged to their colony they felt that they had on their side the moral law, or at anyrate as much of it as sufficed for their simple needs. At Portsmouth in New Hampshire the Sons of Liberty entered the fort in broad daylight, to the sound of music. Disregarding the remonstrances of half a dozen invalids who were quartered in the precincts, they carried off

* "We much desire you to keep a strict guard over the remainder of your powder; for that must be the great means, under God, of the salvation of our country."

sixteen cannon and a hundred barrels of powder with which to load them.

Outside the glacis of the earthworks, which General Gage in hot haste was now constructing across Boston Neck, British rule was dead. The condition of New England then, and throughout the winter, has no parallel in history. Elsewhere provinces and nations, while in open and declared revolt against their former rulers, have been under the control of an organised and established government of their own. But by the end of the year 1774, throughout the northern colonies, the old machinery of administration had ceased to work, and it had not been replaced by new. Elsewhere, as in provincial France after the fall of the Bastille, and in rural Ireland more than once in the course of more than one century, the written law lost its terrors and was not obeyed. But in New England, though the tribunals were void and silent, crime was repressed and private rights were secure, because the people were a law to themselves. It was as if in a quiet English county there were no assizes, no quarter and petty sessions, and no official personage above the rank of a parish overseer. The Selectmen of the townships were the most exalted functionaries who continued to perform their duties. Power rested in each locality with the Committees of Correspondence; and the central authority was the revolutionary convention, or (as it called itself) the Congress, of the colony.

In Massachusetts that Congress had even less than a legal title; for it sate, deliberated, and even existed in defiance of the constitution. Gage had appointed the Assembly to meet at Salem at the commencement of October; but before that date arrived he thought better of it, and issued a proclamation declining to be present as Governor, and discharging the elected representatives from the obligation of attendance. The document was unusual in form, but perfectly clear in meaning. If the members of the Assembly took the course enjoined upon them, all hope of continuing the struggle was over, and they would have nothing to do except to sit by their firesides with hands folded till their fate overtook them. True indeed it was that the Congress of all the provinces was still in session at the capital of Pennsylvania; but the popular leaders of Massachusetts would look in vain to that quarter for protection. It was a far cry to Philadelphia, and the danger was knocking at their own door. The Continental Congress was nothing more than an aggregation of delegates, provided only with general instructions, of varying fulness and tenor, from the colonies by which they were severally commissioned. Those delegates in their corporate capacity were not inclined to usurp executive functions; and they did not as yet think fit to go beyond the stage of presenting to the world, in a precise and forcible shape, the case against the British Government. To make good that case by arms,—and to arms it was plain that the decision must speedily come,—it was essential that there should be an authority

furnished with powers which, whether constitutional or not, were recognised and respected by the people in whose name they were exercised; an authority planted on the scene of action, and inspired by that sort of unanimity and energy which actuates men who know that, if they do not pursue their forward march together and to the end, they have already gone much too far for their personal safety.

The Massachusetts Assembly met. After waiting two days for the Governor who never came, the members constituted themselves into a Congress and adjourned from Salem to the more remote and inaccessible retreat of Concord. Hebrew or English, the names of the two places had little in common with the mood in which these men set forth upon their up-country journey.* True to their national origin, they took some pains to define their constitutional position, and to defend it by adducing precedents and quoting charters. But they had attention to spare for more pressing business. They commenced by ordering "that all the matters that come before the Congress be kept secret, and be not disclosed to any but the members thereof until further order of this body." Then, on the twenty-fourth of October, they appointed a Committee to consider the proper time for laying in warlike stores; and on the same day the Committee reported that the proper time was now. And therefore without delay they voted the purchase of

* "Being King of Salem, which is, King of Peace."—Hebrews VII. 2.

twenty field-pieces and four mortars; twenty tons of grape and round-shot; five thousand muskets and bayonets, and seventy-five thousand flints. They made an agreement to pay no more taxes into the royal Treasury. They arranged a system of assessment for the purposes of provincial defence, and made a first appropriation of ninety thousand dollars. They then proceeded to elect by ballot three generals. They appointed a Committee of Public Safety, of which John Hancock was the most notable and Joseph Warren the most active member. They invested that Committee with authority to call out the militia, every fourth man of whom was expected to hold himself ready to march at a minute's notice;—a condition of service that suggested the name of Minute-men by which the earlier soldiers of the Revolution were called. And, having done the best they knew, they adjourned until the fourth Wednesday in November; by which time the Committee of Public Safety, disbursing their funds thriftily, had bought, in addition to the prescribed amount of ordnance, three hundred and fifty spades and pickaxes, a thousand wooden mess-bowls, and some pease and flour. That was their stock of material wherewith to fight the empire which recently, with hardly any sense of distress, had maintained a long war against France and Spain, and had left them humbled and half ruined at the end of it.

Whether on a large or small scale, the irrevocable step was taken. The Massachusetts congressmen were fully aware that, with the first dollar which passed into

the coffers of their own Receiver-General, the game of armed resistance had begun, and nothing remained except to play it out. Men in power had called them rebels rudely and prematurely; and rebels they now were in fierce earnest. In a series of Resolutions every one of which the most indulgent Attorney-General, without thinking twice about it, would pronounce to be flat treason, they gave consistence and direction to the seething excitement of the province. They recommended to the inhabitants of the several towns and districts that any person who supplied intrenching tools, boards for gun platforms, or draught oxen and horses, to the troops in Boston, ought to be deemed an inveterate enemy to America and held in the highest detestation. The methods of expressing that detestation they left, as they safely might, to local effort and initiative; for ten years of almost unintermittent agitation had perfected New Englanders in the science of making themselves unpleasant to those whom they regarded as bad friends of the cause. They most solemnly exhorted "the Militia in general, as well as the detached part of it in Minute-men, in obedience to the great law of self-preservation," to spare neither trouble nor expense over the task of perfecting themselves in their exercises. And in April 1775, taking more upon them as time went on and perils thickened, they framed and issued a paper of Rules and Regulations for the Massachusetts army. They were not afraid to notify that whatever officer or soldier shamefully abandoned a post com-

mitted to his charge, or induced others to do the like when under fire, should suffer death immediately. Nor were they ashamed to lay down what, according to the tradition of their colony, was the right preparation for that frame of mind in which homely and half-trained men may best meet the stress of danger. All officers and soldiers who, not having just impediment, failed diligently to frequent divine service and to behave decently and reverently when present at it, were to be fined for the benefit of sick poor comrades. The same penalty was imposed upon any who were guilty of profane cursing and swearing.

Their statement of the circumstances on which they grounded the necessity for tightening the bonds of military discipline differed widely from the preamble of the Mutiny Act which annually was placed on the Statute-book at Westminster. That statement consisted in an outspoken vindication of religious and political convictions, ennobled and elevated by the pride of ancestry. "Whereas the lust of power," such was the wording of the recital, "which of old persecuted and exiled our pious and virtuous ancestors from their fair possessions in Britain, now pursues with tenfold severity their guiltless children; and being deeply impressed with a sense of the almost incredible fatigues and hardships our venerable progenitors encountered, who fled from oppression for the sake of civil and religious liberty for themselves and their offspring; and having seriously considered the duty we owe to God, to the memory of

such invincible worthies, to the King, to Great Britain, our country, ourselves, and our posterity, we do think it our indispensable duty to recover, maintain, defend and preserve the free exercise of all those rights and liberties for which many of our forefathers bled and died. And whereas we are frequently told by the tools of the Administration that Great Britain will not relax in her measures until we acknowledge her right of making laws binding upon us in all cases whatever, and that if we persist in our denial of her claim the dispute must be decided by arms, in which it is said we shall have no chance, being undisciplined, cowards, disobedient, impatient of control;"—and so the passage continued to run in phrases clearly showing that its authors had got hold of some sentences which English ministers had recently spoken in Parliament, and were putting their discovery to a telling but most justifiable use.

Having invested themselves with the responsibility of dictating the policy of the colony, and of equipping it for self-defence, the representatives of Massachusetts remained together either at Cambridge or at Concord, (as the chance of interruption by the armed hand of authority was less or more present to their minds,) through the rigours of a New England winter. In consideration of the coldness of the season, and that the Congress met in a room without a fire, it was resolved that the members who inclined thereto might keep on their hats. Resembling in that respect, but in few

others, the British House of Commons, they sate almost continuously; although they adjourned for some days in order to observe a Thanksgiving appointed in acknowledgement of the special protection which Heaven had extended to the colony of Massachusetts. Determined to be thankful, they detected a mark of Divine favour in the unanimity with which their province had faced the crisis. By their fervent recognition of a blessing that, after all, was mainly due to themselves, they gave Providence, on the eve of a doubtful war, a significant indication of the gratitude which they were prepared to feel for such greater mercies as it might have in store for them.

These proceedings, whatever figure they might eventually make in history, were not of a nature to be contemplated with equanimity by the British garrison. Our troops had hitherto behaved on the whole quite as well as could be expected from men who were planted down in such a place for such a purpose. But, by the time the winter was over, their patience had reached its limit. In the first week of March the townspeople assembled to hear the annual address in celebration of the event which was popularly known as the Boston Massacre. The scene has been described by an eyewitness, whose point of view is not disguised by his narrative. "In the pulpit were Warren, the orator of the day, Hancock, Adams,* Church, and others. Some

* This was Samuel Adams. John Adams in a former year de-

of the gentlemen of the army had placed themselves on the top of the pulpit stairs. Officers frequently interrupted Warren by laughing loudly at the most ludicrous parts, and coughing and hemming at the most seditious, to the great discontent of the devoted citizens. The oration however was finished, and it was moved by Adams that an orator should be named for the ensuing fifth of March, to commemorate the bloody and horrid massacre perpetrated by a party of soldiers under the command of Captain Preston. At this the officers could no longer contain themselves, but called 'Fie! Shame!' and 'Fie! Shame!' was echoed by all the Navy and Military in the place. This caused a violent confusion, and in an instant the windows were thrown open and the affrighted Yankees jumped out by fifties."

The ludicrous parts of Warren's speech were, it may be presumed, his references to the Bible; and the promise (which he kept) to give his life in case his life was wanted. And, as a matter of fact, they were declined to take the principal part in the ceremony, on the ground that he had acted as Captain Preston's advocate. "Though the subject of the Oration," he said, "was compatible with the verdict of the Jury, and indeed even with the absolute innocence of the soldiers, yet I found the world in general were not capable or not willing to make the distinction; and therefore I should only expose myself to the lash of ignorant and malicious tongues on both sides of the question." In 1774 he attended the meeting, and heard with admiration John Hancock, who might be trusted not to fall below the topmost altitude of the occasion; and he would most certainly have agreed with every syllable which in 1775 came from the lips of Warren.

women who escaped by the windows.* In the spring of 1775 it took something more than a loud noise to make New England men leave a spot where their duty called on them to stay. The commotion grew from bad to worse until an officer, "dressed in gold lace regimentals, with blue lapels," thought fit to put a gross affront upon the Chairman of the meeting. In the course of the next fortnight the army broke loose from restraint, or rather from self-restraint; for those who ought to have kept others in order were the prime actors in every successive manifestation of partisanship. The day of prayer and fasting ordained by Congress for the whole colony was observed with marked solemnity in the churches of Boston. On that day the members of a corps, which was bent on deserving its title of The King's Own, pitched two "marquee tents" within ten yards of the chapel at the West End of the city, and played their drums and fifes as long as the service lasted, while their Colonel looked approvingly on. Real or reputed patriots of all grades in society became the objects of insult and, where a plausible excuse could be found, of personal violence. A party of officers broke Hancock's windows, and hacked the railing in front of it with their swords. A country fellow who had been tempted (or, as his friends asserted, entrapped) into buying a gun from a soldier, was tarred and feathered in the guard-house of the regiment and paraded about the streets on a truck, escorted by a crowd of

* *American Archives*: March 8, 1775.

all ranks from the commanding officer downwards, and preceded by a band playing "Yankee Doodle."

Those strains were not agreeable hearing for the crowd before whose pinched and anxious faces the procession passed. In and about the town there was plenty of employment to be had which would have kept Boston children plump, and Boston cottages warm and garnished. But for six months past all the mechanics had struck work on the Barracks, and the roughest labourer refused to turn a sod at the fortifications. They hung outside the shops where bricklayers and carpenters, fetched from Nova Scotia, or (a reflection more bitter still) even from New York, were freely spending the excellent wages which in such a strait the Government was only too glad to pay. They stood in line at the doors of the Donation Committee, waiting for their allowance of meal, and rice, and salt fish, the further supply of which was at that very moment in the act of being cut off by the legislation of the British Parliament. They took their turn of labour on municipal industries extemporised under the superintendence of the Selectmen, and paid for out of the savings of that middle class which, as the artisans had the good sense to foresee and the neighbourly feeling to regret, would soon be as poor as themselves.

It was a cheerless season; but for those who looked in the right quarter there still were smiling visages to be seen. "My spirits were very good," a lady said, "until one Saturday riding into town I found the Neck

beset with soldiers; the cannon hoisted; and many Tories on the Neck, and many more going up to see the encampment with the greatest pleasure in their countenances, which gave a damp that I had not before felt." The inner thoughts of these people may be read in a letter from Dr. Samuel Peters, of Hebron in Connecticut. That divine had taken sanctuary in Boston after having been rabbled at home by fellow-townsmen whom he had sorely provoked, if any provocation could excuse outrage. "I am in high spirits," he wrote. "Six regiments are now coming from England, and sundry men-of-war. So soon as they come, hanging work will go on, and destruction will first attend the seaport towns. The lintel sprinkled on the side-posts will preserve the faithful." Years afterwards, when Peters had long been resident in England, his old parishioners learned with interest that the style of preaching, which had given displeasure at Hebron, was too strong meat even for a congregation of Londoners. A brother exile, who heard Peters deliver a sermon in an English metropolitan pulpit, said that "it was hard to conceive how he got there."*

On week-days, when the Episcopal churches were closed, the Boston Tories could draw comfort from the periodical effusions of a vigorous writer, the style of whose prophecies and invectives proved that neither side in the great American controversy had a monopoly of grandiloquence. According to "Massachusettensis,"

* Sabine's *Loyalists*, vol. II.



the Boston Committee of Correspondence was the foulest, subtlest, and most venomous thing that had ever issued from the eggs of the serpent of sedition;—a knot of demagogues, who did for their dupes no more solid service than that of inducing them to swallow a chimera for breakfast. The point of the observation was all the sharper at a time when the families of citizens who followed Hancock and Warren were in a fair way to have very little indeed that was more substantial for breakfast, dinner, or supper either. Such was the condition of mutual charity and goodwill to which George the Third had reduced the inhabitants of a colony into whose local elections, at a date as recent as ten years before, the element of political partisanship had not even entered. 1766 was the first year in which the Selectmen of even so considerable a place as Braintree were chosen for their politics. The waters of strife had then been first stirred by a violent Tory sermon. On the next Sunday a Whig clergyman replied by preaching from the text, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's;" from which things he specially excepted the price of stamps bearing Cæsar's head.

The royalists in Boston, as they watched the reviews on the Common, and listened to the professional opinions which were freely delivered around them, never doubted of a rapid and triumphant issue. Reinforcements continued to arrive from England, and a large body of marines was landed from the squadron. By the end of the year there were eleven battalions in garrison; weak,

for the most part, in numbers; but well-housed, splendidly equipped, and brimming over with confidence. The British officers set a high value on the fighting quality of their own men, which indeed it was not easy to overrate. But the estimation in which they held the colonists was not creditable to their habits of observation or to their knowledge of military history, and said very little indeed for the worth of oral military tradition. "As to what you hear of their taking arms, it is mere bullying, and will go no further than words. Whenever it comes to blows, he that can run fastest will think himself best off. Any two regiments here ought to be decimated if they did not beat in the field the whole force of the Massachusetts province; for though they are numerous, they are but a mere mob without order or discipline, and very awkward in handling their arms."

That was the view of the regimental officers, who were unaware of the fact that colonists, so far from being awkward with their weapons, were as a rule marksmen before they became soldiers. The familiar conversation of the staff, which ought to have been better informed, was in the same strain. The Quartermaster-General wrote home that Congress had appointed three scoundrels to command the militia. It was the very reverse of the real case. The first commanders of the American forces had indeed, as always happens at the commencement of a civil war, the defects of leaders chosen on account of exploits performed many years before; but they were of blameless and even rigid char-

acter. In the days of their early renown, they had gone forth against the power of France in the stern conviction that they themselves were the champions of Protestantism. Seth Pomeroy, a good man, but no better than his colleagues, had seen the hardest service of the three. In September 1755 he was a colonel of a Massachusetts regiment at the action of Lake George, fought by a colonial officer at the head of sixteen or seventeen hundred rustics, very few of whom had been under fire before, against an army largely composed of regulars. The general of the French, in the lightness of his heart, encouraged his soldiers with the assurance that American Militiamen were the worst troops on the face of the earth. After the battle, a prisoner with three bullets in him, he pronounced that in the morning the New Englanders had fought like good boys, at noon like men, and in the afternoon like devils; and at all times of the day their aim was such that their adversaries "dropped like pigeons." Pomeroy, who was employed to bury the slain, took measures to preserve the French dead from the indignities of the Indian scalping-knife. He had lost a brother in the battle. "Dear Sister," he wrote, "this brings heavy tidings; but let not your heart sink at the news, though it be your loss of a dear husband. Monday was a memorable day; and truly you may say, had not the Lord been on our side, we must all have been swallowed up." It was not the letter of a scoundrel.* But the deeds of the colonists in former battles, though

* Parkman's *Montcalm and Wolfe*, vol. I. chapter 9.

well remembered in Paris, were forgotten at British mess-tables. In all ranks of our army there unhappily prevailed that contempt of the enemy before the event which is the only bad omen in war;—quite another sentiment from the invaluable consciousness of superiority arising from the experience of victory.

The latest comers had some excuse for their ignorance of the country; for between them and the outer world an impenetrable veil was spread. Inside Boston there was little to be learned. Whenever a scarlet coat was in the company, Whigs kept their own counsel; and Tories spoke only pleasant things which, human nature being what it was, they had honestly taught themselves to believe. Beyond the fortifications, over a breadth of many score of miles, lay a zone of peril and mystery. Officers could not venture to leave the precincts of the garrison unless they were accompanied by a strong force in military array; and in the case even of such a force its reception depended upon the character of its errand. When the General was contented to march his people out in order to march them back again,—without attempting to impound military stores or arrest political leaders,—the expedition encountered nothing more formidable than black looks and closed shutters. In January 1775 a party of infantry proceeded to Marshfield, with the object of protecting the formation of a Loyal Militia, and took with them fire-arms in greater numbers than there were loyalists in the neighbourhood to carry them. The troops preserved exact discipline. They molested

no one, and no one molested them. As long as they stayed in the town, (so a Government newspaper in New York boasted,) every faithful subject there residing dared freely to utter his thoughts and drink his tea. But when they left Marshfield, and returned to Boston, the Loyal Militia disappeared from history, and General Gage would have felt more easy if he had been certain that their muskets had disappeared with them.

A month afterwards Colonel Leslie sailed to Marblehead, for the purpose of seizing some artillery which the provincials had deposited at Salem as a place of comparative security. He landed his detachment successfully on a Sunday morning; but, when the alarm reached the nearest meeting-house, the congregation turned out and took up a position upon some water which barred his route. They refused to lower the draw-bridge, on the plea that there was no public right of way across it; and, when Leslie attempted to lay hands on a couple of barges, the owners proceeded to scuttle them. The soldiers drew their bayonets, and inflicted some wounds not so wide as the church-door from which the patriots had issued, and only just deep enough to allow Salem to claim the honour of the first drops of blood which were shed in the Revolution. A loyalist clergyman intervened. The people agreed to lower the bridge, and Leslie pledged his honour not to advance thirty rods beyond it. Brave to imprudence when duty as well as danger lay clear before him, he was not prepared, without specific orders from a high quarter, to light the

match which would set the thirteen colonies in a blaze. He recalled his men, and re-embarked them empty-handed just as the company of minute-men from the next township, with plenty more of their like to follow, came marching in to the help of Salem.

A country-side, in this state of effervescence, presented few attractions even to the most adventurous officers of the garrison; whether they were sportsmen, or students of manners, or explorers of the picturesque. But nevertheless one of their number has left a narrative which affords a glimpse of New England in the February of 1775. Gage despatched a captain and an ensign through the counties of Suffolk and Worcester, with a commission to sketch the roads, to observe and report upon the defiles, and to obtain information about forage and provisions. They dressed themselves as countrymen, in "brown clothes, and reddish handkerchiefs." Their disguise was so far artistic that, on their return, the General and his staff mistook them for what they pretended to be; though during their expedition no one, either friend or foe, looked at them twice without detecting what they were. They stopped at a tavern for their dinner, which was brought them by a black woman. "At first she was very civil, but afterwards began to eye us very attentively. We observed to her that it was a very fine country, upon which she answered, 'So it is, and we have got brave fellows to defend it.'" Downstairs she told the soldier-servant, who looked still less of a ploughman than his masters, that,

if his party went any higher up, they would meet with very bad usage. Towards the close of the day they came to a village where they had a more hearty, but a not less alarming, welcome. "We stopped at the sign of the Golden Ball, with the intention to take a drink, and so proceed. But the landlord pleased us so much, as he was not inquisitive, that we resolved to lie there that night; so we ordered some fire to be made, and to get us some coffee. He told us we might have what we pleased, either Tea or Coffee." Their relief on hearing the Shibboleth of loyalty was more than balanced by the reflection that this landlord was not inquisitive only because he had seen all he wanted without needing to ask a single question.

Another stage of their journey brought them to Worcester. "The next day being Sunday we could not think of travelling, as it was not the custom of the country. Nor dare we stir out until the evening, because nobody is allowed to walk the street during divine service without being taken up and examined: so that we thought it prudent to stay at home, where we wrote and corrected our sketches. On our asking what the landlord could give us for breakfast, he told us Tea or anything else we chose. That was an open confession what he was: but for fear he might be imprudent, we did not tell him who we were, though we were certain he knew it. At Shrewsbury we were overtaken by a horseman who examined us very attentively, and especially me, whom he looked at from head to foot as if he

wanted to know me again, and then rode off pretty hard." They got their meal at an inn, and had an opportunity of watching from the window a company of militia at drill. "The commander made a very eloquent speech, recommending patience, coolness, and bravery, (which indeed they much wanted;) quoted Cæsar, Pompey, and Brigadiers Putnam and Ward; recommended them to wait for the English fire, and told them they would always conquer if they did not break; put them in mind of Cape Breton, and observed that the Regulars in the last war must have been ruined but for them. After a learned and spirited harangue he dismissed the parade, and the whole company drank until nine o'clock, and then returned to their homes full of pot-valour." The allusion to Cape Breton showed that the rank and file of the colonial militia were familiar with the true history of that first siege of Louisburg which Sandwich had so woefully garbled for the amusement of the Peers.

On their way to Marlborough the two officers were accosted by riders, who asked them point-blank whether they were in the army, and then passed on towards the town. They arrived after nightfall, in what now would be called a blizzard; but the street was alive and buzzing. They were waylaid and interrogated by a baker who, as they afterwards learned, had a deserter from their own regiment harboured on his premises. They had hardly entered the dwelling of Mr. Barnes, a well-to-do loyalist, when the town-doctor, who had not been inside their host's door for two years past, invited him-

self to supper and fell to cross-examining the children about their father's guests. They were sent off again into the darkness at once, and not a minute too soon; for immediately after their departure the Committee of Correspondence invaded the house, searched it from garret to cellar, and told the owner that, if they had caught his visitors under his roof, they would have pulled it down about his ears.* It was not until the travellers had completed a march of two and thirty miles through wind and snow that they reached a friendly refuge, and were comforted with a bottle of mulled Madeira, and a bed where they could rest in safety. Next morning they walked back to Boston, having enjoyed the rare privilege of being in contact with an Anglo-Saxon population as highly charged with electricity as any among the Latin races at the most exciting junctures of their history.

At last the thunder-cloud broke, and flash after flash lit up the gloom which overhung the land. Gage, rather because he was expected to take some forward step than because he saw clearly where to go, conceived the idea of destroying the stores which had been collected at Concord. The force told off for this ser-

* *American Archives*: Feb. 22, 1775. The entertainer of these officers paid dearly for his opinions. An important Whig, whose goods were within the British lines at Boston, was allowed by way of compensation to use the furniture of the Marlborough loyalist for his own so long as the siege lasted. Mr. Barnes was subsequently proscribed and banished. He died in London.

vice, according to a faulty practice of those times, consisted of detachments from many regiments; and the officer in charge of the whole was incompetent. The troops started before midnight. At four in the morning, just as an April day was breaking, they reached the village of Lexington, and found sixty or seventy of the local militia waiting for them on the common. Firing ensued, and the Americans were dispersed, leaving seven of their number dead or dying. It was a chilly and a depressing prologue to a mighty drama. The British advanced to Concord, where they spoiled some flour, knocked the trunnions off three iron guns, burned a heap of wooden spoons and trenchers, and cut down a Liberty pole. In order to cover these trumpery operations a party of a hundred infantry had been stationed at a bridge over the neighbouring river, and towards ten o'clock they were attacked by about thrice as many provincials, who came resolutely on. After two or three had fallen on either side, the regulars gave way and retreated in confusion upon their main body in the centre of the town.

Pages and pages have been written about the history of each ten minutes in that day, and the name of every colonist who played a part is a household word in America. The main outlines of the affair are beyond dispute. When Colonel Smith discovered that there was nothing for him to do at Concord, and made up his mind to return to Boston, he should have returned forthwith. As it was, he delayed till noon; and those

two hours were his ruin. The provincials who had been engaged at the bridge did not push their advantage. They hesitated to act as if war had been openly declared against England; and they were not in a vindictive frame of mind, as they had heard nothing beyond a vague report of the affair at Lexington. But by the time the British commander had completed his arrangements for withdrawing from his position the whole country was up, in front, around, and behind him. Those who came from the direction of the sea knew what had taken place that day at early dawn; and, where they had got the story wrong, it was in a shape which made them only the more angry. From every quarter of the compass over thirty miles square the Ezras, and Abners, and Silases were trooping in. The rural township of Woburn "turned out extraordinary," and marched into action a hundred and eighty strong. The minute-men of Dedham, encouraged by the presence of a company of veterans who had fought in the French wars, spent, but did not waste, the time that was required to hear a prayer from their clergyman as they stood on the green in front of the church steps. Then they started on their way, "leaving the town almost literally without a male inhabitant before the age of seventy, and above that of sixteen." Carrying guns which had been used in old Indian battles, and headed by drums which had beat at Louisburg, they covered the hillsides and swarmed among the enclosures and the coppices in such numbers

that it seemed to their adversaries "as if men had dropped from the clouds." It was a calamity for the British that the first encounter of the war took place under circumstances which made their success a military impossibility. When a force, no larger than the rear-guard of an army, is obliged to retreat and to continue retreating, the extent of the disaster is only a question of the amount of ground that has to be traversed, and of the activity and audacity which the enemy display. The colonists knew the distance at which their fire was effective, and were determined, at any personal risk, to get and to remain within that range. The English regimental officers, whenever one of them could collect a few privates of his own corps, made a good fight during the earlier stage of the retreat. But, before they emerged from the woods which lined most of the six miles between Concord and Lexington, ammunition began to fail; the steadier men were largely employed in helping the wounded along; many of the soldiers rather ran than marched in order; and the column passed through Lexington a beaten and, unless speedy help should come, a doomed force.

They had still before them twice as much road as they had travelled already. But the very worst was over; because a few furlongs beyond the town they were met by the reserves from Boston. The supporting body was better composed than their own, for it was made up of whole regiments; and it was much better commanded. Lord Percy, owing to stupid blunders which

were no fault of his, should have been at Concord by eleven in the morning instead of being near Lexington at two in the afternoon; but, now that he was on the ground, he proved that he knew his business. He disposed the field pieces which he had brought with him in such a manner as to check the provincials, and give a welcome respite to Colonel Smith's exhausted soldiers. When the homeward march recommenced, he fought strongly and skilfully from point to point. The hottest work of the whole day was as far along the line of retreat as West Cambridge. It was there that an example was made of some minute-men who had covered sixteen miles in four hours in order to occupy a post of vantage, and who were too busy towards their front to notice that there was danger behind them in the shape of a British flanking party. But the Americans were in great heart, and they were briskly and gallantly led. The senior officer present was General Heath, a brave and honest man, who had learned war from books, but who did well enough on a day when the most essential quality in a commander was indifference to bullets. And Warren had hurried up from Boston, eager to show that his oration of the month before was not a string of empty words. "They have begun it," he said, as he was waiting to cross the Ferry. "That either party could do. And we will end it. That only one can do." From the moment that he came under fire at Lexington he was as conspicuous on the one side as Lord Percy on the other; and there was not much to

choose between the narrowness of their escapes, for the New Englander had the hair-pin shot out of a curl, and the Northumbrian had a button shot off his waist-coat.

No courage or generalship on the part of the British commander could turn a rearward march into a winning battle. As the afternoon wore on, his men had expended nearly all their cartridges; and they had nothing to eat, for the waggons containing their supplies had been captured by the exertions of a parish minister. "I never broke my fast," so a soldier related, "for forty-eight hours, for we carried no provisions. I had my hat shot off my head three times. Two balls went through my coat, and carried away my bayonet from my side."* The provincials had surmounted their respect for the cannon, and kept at closer quarters than ever. As the tumult rolled eastwards into the thickly inhabited districts near the coast, the militia came up in more numerous and stronger companies, fresh and with full pouches. When the sun was setting the retiring troops, half starved and almost mad with thirst, came to a halt on the English side of the causeway over which the Cambridge highway entered the peninsula of Charlestown. They were only just in time. "From the best accounts I have been able to collect," Washington wrote six weeks later on, "I believe the fact, stripped of all colouring, to be plainly this; that if the retreat had not been as precipitate as it was, (and God knows

* *American Archives*: Letter of April 28, 1775.

it could not well have been more so,) the ministerial troops must have surrendered, or been totally cut off. For they had not arrived in Charlestown, under cover of their ships, half an hour before a powerful body of men from Marblehead and Salem was at their heels, and must, if they had happened to be up one hour sooner, inevitably have intercepted their retreat to Charlestown." That was the conclusion at which Washington arrived; and his view, then or since, has never been disputed.*

The Americans lost from ninety to a hundred men, of whom more than half were killed outright; and the British about three times as many. The strategic results of the affair were out of all proportion to the numbers engaged in it; for it settled the character and direction of the first campaign in the Revolutionary war. For fifteen months to come the British army did not again take the open field. Bunker's Hill was but a sortie on a large scale, and ranks only as a terrible and glorious episode in the operations of a siege which, by the time the battle was fought, had already lasted for the space of eight weeks. For when Lord Percy crossed Charlestown Neck, and General Heath halted on Charlestown Common, the invasion of Massachusetts by the English was over, and the blockade of Boston by the Americans had begun. In the previous December the Secretary for War had confided his anticipations to the Secretary for the Colonies. "I doubt," so his letter ran, "whether all

* Washington from Philadelphia to George William Fairfax in England; May 31, 1775.

the troops in North America, though probably enow for a pitched battle with the strength of the Province, are enow to subdue it: being of great extent, and full of men accustomed to fire-arms. It is true they have not been thought brave, but enthusiasm gives vigour of mind and body unknown before." * As Lord Barrington had turned his attention to the subject of courage, it was a pity that he could not find enough of it to tell his views to the King and the Bedfords, instead of writing them to Dartmouth, who knew them already. But at sundown on the nineteenth of April the event had spoken; and it mattered little now what the English Ministers said, or left unsaid, among themselves.

* *The Political Life of Viscount Barrington*; Section VIII.

CHAPTER IX.

THE INVESTMENT OF BOSTON. THE ARRIVAL OF THE
MAJOR-GENERALS. BUNKER'S HILL.

MASSACHUSETTS, from the nature of the case, had fought the first engagement single-handed; but consequences were sure to ensue which would be too much for her unassisted strength. Next morning her Committee of Safety reported the condition of affairs to the rest of the New England provinces, and urged them to send help and to send it promptly. "We shall be glad," they said, "that our brethren who come to our aid may be supplied with military stores and provisions, as we have none of either more than is absolutely necessary for ourselves." These words were written as soon as it was light; but the people to whom they were addressed did not generally wait for a summons. The news of Lexington found Israel Putnam, in leather frock and apron, busy among his hired men over the labours of his farm. He started off on a round of visits to the nearest towns of Connecticut; called out the militia; and ordered them to follow him as fast as they were mustered. Then he set out for Cambridge, and arrived there at daybreak on the twenty-first of April, having ridden the

same horse a hundred miles within the eighteen hours. By noon on the twentieth the word had got across the Merrimac, and the boats on their return journey were crowded with New Hampshire minute-men. "At dusk," Mr. Bancroft writes, "they reached Haverhill ferry, a distance of twenty-seven miles, having run rather than marched. They halted at Andover only for refreshments, and, traversing fifty-five miles in less than twenty hours, by sunrise on the twenty-first paraded on Cambridge Common."

Rhode Island was somewhat more deliberate and, as befitted its size, more heedful of its dignity. On the twenty-fifth of April the Assembly of the little community voted to raise an army of observation which should co-operate with the forces of the neighbouring colonies, but with a separate ordnance department, and a Commander-in-Chief of its own. If they were bent on a policy of isolation and punctiliousness they had chosen the wrong man to have charge of their troops in the field. Nathaniel Greene was a born soldier, and had in him the material for making the sort of general under whom other born soldiers desire to fight. For years past he would leave his ordinary occupations, if for nothing else, in order to be present at any review where a score of militia companies were being put through their exercises together. He had been seen, in a coat and hat of Quaker fashion, watching the regulars on the Common at Boston, and buying treatises on the Military Art at the booksellers. When he arrived in camp he

found his troops lukewarm for the cause, and in a state of discipline demanding on his part capabilities of a higher order than could be acquired out of a drill-book. But before many weeks were over he had them thoroughly in hand, and he showed himself as eager to obey as he was competent to command. When Washington was placed by Congress at the head of the Continental army, the Assembly of Rhode Island got the better of their passion for independent action; and Greene had the satisfaction of placing himself and his contingent at the disposal of one who, as the captain of a citizen army, would have stood a comparison after the manner of Plutarch with any of those heroes of antiquity whose histories Greene had so long and so lovingly studied.

The army of New England—for such it was, and such, by whatever title it might be called, it remained until the fate of New England was finally and irrevocably decided—soon attained a strength of sixteen thousand men. Of these Connecticut furnished two thousand three hundred, New Hampshire and Rhode Island between them about as many, and Massachusetts the rest. On the morning after the fight General Heath, before he handed over the command, took measures to provide a first meal for the assembled multitude. “All the eatables in the town of Cambridge, which could be spared, were collected for breakfast, and the college kitchen and utensils procured for cooking. Some carcasses of beef and pork, prepared for the Boston market, were ob-

tained; and a large quantity of ship-bread, said to belong to the British Navy, was taken."* Such were the foundations of a commissariat system which, as long as Boston was the seat of war, kept itself on a level with the reputation of that well-fed neighbourhood. The organisation of the army in all other departments was loose and primitive, but, until the British garrison should become numerous enough again to take the offensive, not inefficient. The Congress of Massachusetts had nominated General Artemas Ward to command their forces; and the superior officers from the other colonies copied his orders of the day, and yielded him as much obedience as he cared to exact, which was very little. He was old and ill; unable to get on horseback; and quite willing to leave to his energetic and enthusiastic brigadiers the responsibility of guarding their own front, when once he had allotted to them their posts in the line of investment.

Elementary as were their warlike arrangements, the Americans presented a formidable appearance when viewed from behind the intrenchments opposite. Many of them were dressed in the working clothes which they had been wearing when the alarm reached them in their fields and villages; and they were officered by tradesmen, and mechanics, and graziers who differed little from those of their own class in Europe, except that they esteemed themselves as good as people who had been brought up to do nothing. But that levy of

* *Heath's Memoirs*: April, 1775.

civilians had already vindicated their claim to be treated in as strict conformity to the laws and even the courtesies of war, as if they had been so many thousand white-coated Frenchmen, with a Marshal to command them and with Dukes and Marquises for their colonels. Gage soon discovered that, when he wanted anything from the colonists, he would have to ask for it civilly. After a long negotiation with the authorities of the popular party he concluded an agreement under which all inhabitants of Boston who, when the siege commenced, found themselves on what they considered the wrong side of the wall, might pass from town to country (or, as the case might be, from country to town,) and take their chattels with them. Early in June the Americans obtained a practical recognition of their rights as combatants in the shape of an exchange of prisoners; and the occasion was lacking in none of the compliments and hospitalities with which the chivalry of warfare has, time out of mind, invested that ceremony. The event was the more grateful to men of honour in both camps because it led to the final extinction of a singularly discreditable calumny. The London Gazette, in an official account of the affair of the nineteenth of April, informed the world that the provincials had scalped the wounded. When the English who had been captured were restored to their regiments they all, officers and men, were warm in their expressions of gratitude for the kindness they had met with, and the tenderness with which they had been nursed; for very few of them had been taken un-

hurt.* From that day forward nothing more was heard of a fable very unlike anything which, before or since, has appeared in a military despatch written in our language. The Americans, if they had been on the watch for a grievance, might with some plausibility have put forward counter-charges; because, when a force loses more killed than wounded, there is ground for supposing that rough things were done by the enemy. But they knew that hand-to-hand fighting is a rude and blind business; they were satisfied by having so quickly conquered the respect of their redoubtable adversary; and their complacency was not diminished by the indignation which these mutual amenities excited in the Boston Tories, who had devoutly believed in all the vaunts that Gage had ever uttered about his fixed determination never to treat with rebels.

The hour was at hand when the title of the Americans to rank as belligerents was to be severely tested. In the early summer reinforcements from home raised

* An antidote to the calumny was not long in reaching England. In the June number of the *Gentleman's Magazine* there appeared a statement by a Lieutenant of the King's own regiment. "I was wounded," he says, "at the attack of the bridge, and am now treated with the greatest humanity, and taken all possible care of, by the Provincials at Medford." Gage was expressly told that his own surgeons might come out and dress the wounded; but there was no need of it, for they were admirably doctored. A soldier's wife wrote home on the 2nd of May; "My husband was wounded and taken prisoner: but they use him well, and I am striving to get to him, as he is very dangerous. My husband is now lying in one of their hospitals, at a place called Cambridge. I hear my husband's leg is broke, and my heart is broke."

the British garrison to seventeen battalions of infantry, and five companies of artillery. Gage had now at his disposition a force half as large again as the army which triumphed at Culloden, and four times more numerous than the regular troops who crushed the rising of our Western counties at Sedgemoor. On the twenty-fifth of May the Cerberus arrived with the Major-Generals on board. They disembarked under a fire of epigrams which their number, taken in conjunction with the name of the three-headed monster after whom their ship was called, suggested to those Boston wits who had read Virgil, or at anyrate a classical dictionary. It was an evil day for Gage when Burgoyne landed; for the faults and the merits of that officer combined to make him as dangerous a subordinate as ever a commander was afflicted with. Inventive and enterprising, and undeniably gallant, he had obtained just enough military celebrity to turn his head, and to tempt him through discontent into disloyalty towards his chief. Before leaving London he had been admitted, among other guests, to the weekly dinner of the Cabinet. He was impressed by the absurdity of pretending to do the secret business of the State in "so numerous and motley a company;" but he had made excellent use of his opportunities for his own personal advantage. He had succeeded in establishing relations with great men, and men on the way to greatness, no one of whom was fully aware how intimate Burgoyne was with the others. As soon as he was ashore at Boston he began a cor-

respondence with Lord Rochford, who was a Secretary of State, and Lord George Germaine, who seemed likely to become one; with Lord Dartmouth, with the Military Secretary of the Horseguards, and above all with the Prime Minister. Burgoyne's voluminous but always vivid and interesting letters, the burden of which was a searching exposure of Gage's mistakes, ruined that officer in the judgment of his employers, and remain on record to destroy his chance of passing in the eyes of posterity as an unfortunate rather than an incapable commander. But, however full Burgoyne's sheet might be with comments upon his chief's blundering strategy, there always was a corner kept for the demands of self-interest. When addressing a Minister, or anyone who had the ear of a Minister, the persuasive Major-General never failed to insist on the paltry nature of his own present functions as compared with his abilities and antecedents; and implored that he might be recalled to England for the purpose of giving the Cabinet, by word of mouth, information and advice which he could not venture to set down in writing.

That which was reported about Gage to Downing Street was a grave matter for him; but his fame suffered still more from the compositions which his eloquent subordinate prepared for publication, at his request and in his name. Proud of his soldiership, Burgoyne rated himself higher yet in his character as an author. His most ambitious literary efforts belonged to the leisure of a later period in his life, when there was no further

demand for the services of his unlucky sword. Up to 1775 he had achieved nothing more durable than prologues and epilogues; and, as his highest flight, he had prepared an operatic version of "As You Like It." One quatrain will suffice as a specimen of the adaptation.

Who was the man that struck the deer?
The badge of triumph let him wear.
Round the haunch of the noble prey
Hail him, hail him, lord of the day!

But Burgoyne was as much in love with his pen as if he had written the original comedy. That pen he now placed at the disposal of his superior in command. His style, excellent in a letter, became artificial in a state-paper, and had in it a touch of rhodomontade fatally unsuited to documents which dealt with burning questions at a time of almost unexampled seriousness. On the twelfth of June General Gage issued a proclamation denouncing the rebels who, "with a preposterous parade of military arrangement affected to hold the royal army besieged;" assuring "the infatuated multitude" that he did not bear the sword in vain; declaring martial law; offering pardon to such as would lay down their arms, and "stand distinct and separate from the parricides of the constitution;" but excepting from that pardon, under any condition whatsoever, Samuel Adams and John Hancock. No manifesto was ever worse adapted to the taste of its intended readers, except perhaps the celebrated address to the French nation in the year 1792 which earned for the Duke of Brunswick a place

in literature as the most unsuccessful of royal authors. The minute and affectionate care which evidently had been bestowed on the task of polishing each of the bloodthirsty sentences in Gage's proclamation suggested to the patriots that it had been prompted by the devil; but as a matter of fact it was drafted by Burgoyne who, except on paper, was as humane a man as lived. And so it came to pass that Gage, after all the disasters which overtook him on account of his being exceedingly dull, contrived to saddle himself with the additional curse of a reputation for pretentious and misplaced cleverness.

Burgoyne was on surer ground when he was exposing to Cabinet Ministers the defects and dangers of the military situation. He and his two colleagues were filled with surprise and shame by the state of matters which they found at Boston. These paladins of the great war, accustomed to drive the enemy whenever and wherever they met him, were greeted by the news that a British force, as large as any which had ever taken the field in America, was blockaded in its quarters by an army of whose existence they had never even heard until that moment. The town on the land side, Burgoyne wrote, was invested by a rabble in arms flushed with success and insolence, who had advanced their sentries within pistol-shot of the royal outposts. The servants of the Crown, and their well-wishers among the civil

population, were lost in a stupefaction of anger, bewilderment, and despondency. All passes which led to the mainland were closely beleaguered; and, even if the hostile lines were forced, the British were not in a condition to make a forward movement. Bread-waggon, hospital-carriages, sumpter-horses, and artillery-horses were wanting. The magazines had been left unfurnished; the military chest was empty; and there was no money in the town. Our troops were unpaid, and our officers could not get their bills cashed at any sacrifice. Even the five hundred pounds apiece, which his Majesty promised that his Major-Generals should receive on their arrival, were not forthcoming. And all this at a time when, (so Burgoyne declared with a pathos which soared above statistics,) a pound of fresh mutton could only be bought for its weight in gold. For the apathy and dejection which prevailed among military people had gained the sister service. The royal ships lay idle and helpless, expecting from day to day to be cannonaded at their moorings. The crews of the rebel whale-boats had cleared off the sheep and cattle from the neighbouring islands; had burned a British schooner under the very eyes of the Admiral; and had carried away her guns to arm their own batteries. When those batteries opened fire, there would be witnessed the most singular and shameful event in the history of the world,—a paltry skirmish, (for Lexington was nothing more,) “inducing results as rapid and decisive as the battle of Pharsalia; and the colours of the fleet and

army of Great Britain, without a conflict, kicked out America."

The writing was classical, after the model of Junius rather than of Julius Cæsar. But the sentiments were those of a soldier; and Burgoyne took no pains to hide them in any company. He exclaimed to the first colonist whom he met, in the course of a talk which served the purpose of the modern interview of disembarkation; "Let us get in, and we will soon find elbow-room." The saying caught the popular ear, and the time was not far distant when its author learned to his cost that it is more easy to coin a phrase than to recall it from circulation. The lie of the country was such that Burgoyne's expression exactly represented the necessities of the hour. To North and South of the peninsula of Boston, separated from the town in each case by some five hundred yards of salt water, two headlands of the same conformation and size as the peninsula itself ran out into the bay.* If Gage made play with his elbows he would sweep the heights of Dorchester on his left hand, and the heights above Charlestown on his right. His subordinates insisted that he should exert himself. As soon as there was a prospect of fighting under leaders whom it was an

* All localities mentioned in the text may be identified in the map of "Boston and its Environs" at the end of Vol. I., reproduced from the Atlas accompanying Marshall's *Life of Washington*, published at Philadelphia in 1804. The map has been partially coloured, and a certain number of additional places marked, for purposes of elucidation.

honour to follow, the army recovered its spirits, and, of all the disagreeable sensations which had affected it, retained none except resentment. "I wish the Americans may be brought to a sense of their duty. One good drubbing, which I long to give them, might have a good effect towards it." That was how Captain Harris, a young man of spirit, with a great future before him, (for he died Lord Harris of Seringapatam,) wrote home on the twelfth of June; and by every packet which sailed for England such letters were being posted by the score.

Gage and his advisers, with sound judgment, determined to begin by occupying the heights of Dorchester. The promontory which lay to the South was of the two the more accessible to the Americans; and, if they succeeded in establishing themselves there, it would be a more tenable post and a more formidable menace to the garrison of Boston. But the earlier operations in a civil war are dictated rather by human nature than by strategic principles; and the clash of battle, when it arose, broke out in an unexpected quarter. The moral forces at work in the Colonial and in the British camps were not dissimilar. General Ward, like General Gage and with much better reason, would have preferred to strengthen his defences and stay quiet behind them; but he too had brigadiers who were bent upon action. An American council of war debated the proposal to seize and fortify the heights of Charlestown. Ward was against the plan, and Warren also; for it was a question

of policy and not of valour. But Putnam took the other side, on grounds which were characteristic of the man. The operation in his view was so critical, and the position so exposed, that the British would be irresistibly tempted to attack under circumstances which might be trusted to bring out the strongest points of the colonists. "The Americans," he said, "are not afraid of their heads, though very much afraid of their legs. If you cover these, they will fight forever." Even such a qualified species of courage was a great deal to demand from men who had never been drilled to hold up their heads, and whose legs had hitherto been chiefly employed in walking between the plough handles. But Putnam, if anyone, knew the best and the worst which could be expected from his countrymen at the stage of military discipline to which they had then attained. His opinion carried weight in a quarter where, at that portion of the Revolution, the ultimate decision lay. On the fifteenth of June the Committee of Safety of the Massachusetts Congress unanimously resolved to advise the Council of War that possession of the hill called Bunker's Hill in Charlestown should be securely kept, and defended by sufficient forces.

Next evening twelve hundred New Englanders were paraded on Cambridge Common, and listened to the President of Harvard College while he invoked the divine blessing on an enterprise the nature of which was still a secret for almost all his hearers. They were under the command of Colonel Prescott, who was old

enough to have served at Cape Breton, where he had exhibited qualities which procured him the offer from the British military authorities of a commission in the regular army. When night fell the expedition started; the Colonel in front, and carts filled with intrenching-tools following in the rear. The men had their weapons, their blankets, and one day's rations; loose powder in their horns, but not very much of it; and in their pouches bullets which they had cast themselves. Even so they had plenty to carry. Their equipment was described by a lieutenant of the Royal Marines; a corps which, after its usual custom, contrived next day to get a very near view of the enemy. Both officers and soldiers, this gentleman wrote, wore their own clothes; nor did he see any colours to their regiments. Their firelocks seemed unwieldy, and some were of quite extraordinary length; but the men, he remarked, were mostly robust and larger than the English. It must be remembered, too, that the clumsy gun was an old friend, with whose good and bad qualities they were intimately acquainted; which they preferred even to an elegant Tower musket, weighing only fifteen pounds without the bayonet, so long as there was something in front of them on which to rest their barrel.

Prescott made his way by the aid of dark lanterns over Bunker's Hill, which at the highest point rose but a hundred and ten feet above the level of the sea. He halted his men further to the eastward on a still lower spur of the same upland. They looked straight down

on the lights of Charlestown, and they stood within twelve hundred yards of the Boston batteries, and nearer yet to the men-of-war which lay in the channel. Lines of fortification were marked out; arms were stacked and spades and pickaxes distributed. Farmers and farm-hands wanted no teaching for that part of the business; and everyone except the sentries, officers and soldiers alike, fell to work in silence and with extraordinary speed. When day broke,—and on the seventeenth of June it was not long in appearing,—the morning watch on the British vessels discovered an intrenchment six feet high where overnight there had been smooth pasture. The ships, and the guns ashore, concentrated their fire upon the little redoubt, which measured fifty yards on its longest face. The noise was terrific, for the part of the squadron which was engaged carried eighty cannon on a broadside; and, as the forenoon went on, the flood-tide brought with it several floating batteries which took up their position within easy range. The Americans, who had not the means of replying, liked it little at first; but Prescott, on the pretence that he wanted a better point of view from which to superintend his people as they worked inside the wall, sauntered round the top of the parapet, giving directions where to place the gun-platforms, and banting those who were not as handy with the saw as they had been with the shovel. A royal General noticed him in his blue coat and three-cornered hat, and asked whether he would fight. The person to whom, as

happened, the Englishman applied for his information was Prescott's own brother-in-law; who asseverated with a great oath that on that point he would answer in the affirmative for his kinsman. More quietly worded but sincere and eager testimony with regard to the part played by Prescott was given in much later years by David How of Haverhill in Massachusetts. How had been currying leather in a small way before he joined the American army in 1775, and was still currying leather on a large scale in 1842. A few months before his death the old man was asked about his experiences inside the Redoubt. "I tell ye," he cried, "that if it had not been for Colonel Prescott there would have been no fight. He was all night and all the morning talking to the soldiers and moving about with his sword among them in such a way that they all felt like fight."

If the cannonade had driven the Americans from their works there would have been bitter disappointment in the British garrison. Something was said at headquarters about landing a force on Charlestown Neck, and so taking the colonists in the rear. Something was said about starving them into surrender by stationing gunboats on either flank of the isthmus, which was only a hundred yards in breadth and had no protection against a cross-fire. One or the other of the two courses would have been tactically correct, and our officers owed it to their military conscience to make a pretence of discussing them; but neither the generals nor the army were in a mood to wait. To win without

fighting had no attraction for men who on the last occasion had fought without winning. Our troops were eager to try conclusions at the earliest moment, and under difficulties which would enable them to show their mettle. As soon as it was known that there were fortifications to attack, the resolution to approach them in front was automatic and all but unanimous. By one o'clock of the day four entire regiments, and twenty companies of grenadiers and light infantry, had landed on the extreme East of the peninsula, to the North of Charlestown. Howe, who was in command, after carefully inspecting the ground in face of him, sent back the barges for reinforcements and ordered his men to take their dinner. In a couple of hours the flotilla returned with two more battalions. The assaulting force was now between two thousand and twenty-five hundred strong; and soldiers more full of heart, and in more gallant trim, had never stepped over the gunwale of a boat on-to soil which they meant to make their own.

It was high time for the Americans also to demand help from their main army. Some of the officers in the redoubt thought it their duty to go even further, and urged Prescott to claim that those companies which had borne the labour of the night, and the strain of the bombardment, should be relieved by other troops. Not a few of the minute-men, as inexperienced soldiers will, had left their bread and meat behind them. There was no water to be had, and the heat was stifling. But Prescott would have none of it. The men might be

hungry and thirsty, and had already done a double turn of duty; but they had become accustomed to cannon-balls and, when it came to bullets, might be trusted better than any newcomers to defend the fortifications which their own hands had raised. Those fortifications consisted of the redoubt, and a breastwork extending a hundred yards towards the left of the position. From the end of the breastwork to the North shore of the peninsula the country was open. On that side the British overlapped and threatened Prescott's flank; and he accordingly told off a detachment of Connecticut militia to occupy the vacant interval. They were soon joined there by a fine Massachusetts regiment, which came fresh from camp; and the combined force stationed themselves along the foot of Bunker's Hill, well to the rear of the redoubt. They were covered by a low fence, stone below and rails above, the interstices of which they had stuffed with piles of hay. A poor defence against musketry, and none whatever against cannon, at all events it marked the line which they meant to hold. It was a bulwark much of the same character as that behind which their descendants stood on the Cemetery hill at Gettysburg.

When the fight began, the colonists mustered fifteen hundred men; quite as many, if all present stood their ground, as could be effectively employed along a front of less than seven hundred paces. They had six cannon; and generals in plenty, though none to spare. It was a day on which good example could not be

too abundant. The military etiquette prevailing in the American lines was not yet rigid enough to prohibit an officer of rank from taking part in an operation outside the precincts of his own command. Seth Pomeroy had borrowed a mount from the Commander-in-Chief; but the cannon-fire which raked Charlestown Neck was so hot that he did not conceive himself justified in risking an animal not his own property. His person, however, belonged to himself; so he walked across the isthmus and up to the rail-fence, where he was received with cheers, and provided with a musket. Putnam, who had horses of his own and never spared them, was seen during the course of the afternoon in every corner of the field. Wherever he might be, he took his share of the danger, and a great deal more than his share of the responsibility which was going a-begging. Warren, the evening before, had been in the Chair of the Massachusetts Congress; and he now came on to the ground with a bad headache, which was soon to be cured. Like everybody else on that day, he fell in with Putnam, and asked him where would be the crisis of the battle. Putnam directed him to the redoubt; and, when he showed himself within the enclosure, Prescott greeted him warmly and offered him the command. But Warren refused to take over a trust which had hitherto been so admirably discharged, and assured those who were within hearing of him that he was only one of two thousand who were marching to their assistance. And thereupon, as a first instalment of the promised reinforce-

ments, he placed himself gun in hand among the marksmen who lined the wall.

He was just in time. At three o'clock the second British detachment landed, and Howe at once proceeded to the business of the afternoon. He briefly and frankly explained to his men the situation of the army, which nothing could save except a victory. "I shall not," he told them, "desire one of you to go a step further than where I go myself;" and, whatever the case might have been where it was a promise to his constituents, when Howe spoke as a soldier he acted up to what he said. He then marched straight at the rail-fence, with the grenadiers and the light infantry behind him. The Marines and the Forty-seventh Regiment advanced upon the redoubt; while the breastwork was assaulted by the Forty-third and the Fifty-second,—numbers which are indissolubly linked in the memory of those who have studied on Napier's pages the story of the Light Division in the Peninsular War. Such military rhetoric as was employed by the American leaders was of the most practical character; and up to the very last moment they were exhorting their people to aim low, to fire at the handsome coats, and above all to wait so long that there could be no mistake between one uniform and another.

The American artillery was badly served, for reasons which it subsequently required a couple of court-martials to explain for the benefit of those who exacted too much from the scientific department of a raw army.

On the other hand, the round shot which had been brought across the bay did not fit the British field pieces; and the officer in charge pronounced the ground in his front so soft that they could not be driven up within range for grape. The royal troops moved forward steadily, but all too slowly. They were burdened with full knapsacks; the hay rose above their knees; they had fence after fence to cross; and they were allowed to open fire too soon. The colonists would have followed the example; but their commanders were on the alert. Putnam, at the rail-fence, threatened to cut down the next man who let his gun off without orders; and Prescott's officers ran round the top of the parapet and kicked up the muzzles of the firelocks. When the discharge came at last, the execution done was very great. The British volleys, delivered with the regularity of a full-dress review, were almost disregarded by the colonists; who were loading under cover, talking among themselves, and arranging to shoot, two or three together, at the same officer. "Before the intrenchments were forced," wrote Lieutenant Clarke of the Marines, "a man whom the Americans called a Marksman or Rifleman was seen standing upon something near three feet higher than the rest of the troops, as their hats were not visible. This man had no sooner discharged one musket than another was handed to him, and continued firing in that manner for ten or twelve minutes. In that small space of time it is supposed that he could not kill or wound less than twenty officers. But he

soon paid his tribute; for, upon being noticed, he was killed by the Grenadiers of the Royal Welsh Fuzileers." The attack fared badly in every quarter of the field. "Our light infantry," another army letter relates, "were served up in companies against the grass fence. Most of our grenadiers and light infantry, the moment of presenting themselves, lost three fourths, and many nine tenths of their men. Some had only eight and nine men a company left; some only three, four, and five."* Ten minutes, or it might be fifteen, of such work, (for no one present had the curiosity to take the time,) showed the British leaders that the position could not be carried then; and the less resolute among them already doubted whether it could be carried at all. The assaulting force retreated; and Howe, with the composure of a man who had more than once been in affairs which began ill and ended to his satisfaction, rallied and re-formed his troops as soon as he had withdrawn them out of gun-shot.

The British advanced a second time in the same style as before. The men were still overloaded. Again they came on firing. Their opponents noticed and admired the deliberation with which they stepped over the bodies of their fallen comrades; for the acclivity leading up to the American lines, (as was said of the face of the hill between Hougoumont and La Haye Sainte

* These companies are stated to have averaged thirty-nine men at the commencement of the battle. *Clarke's Narrative*; p. 15.

by one who had been at Badajos,* already resembled rather a breach after an assault than a portion of a field of battle. The colonists this time did not pull a trigger until the British van was within forty yards, and then aimed at the waist-belts. A continuous stream of flashes poured forth along the whole extent of the intrenchments, from the instant that the word was given to fire until the ground in front was cleared of all except the dead and wounded. The British officers, utterly regardless of everything but their duty, urged the men forward with voice and sword-hilt; and, where no officers were left, the oldest privates placed themselves in charge of the half sections which represented what once had been companies. Howe, on the morning of Quebec, had stood with twenty-four others in a forlorn hope on the heights of Abraham; but he was more alone now. He had twelve officers, naval and military, in his personal staff at Bunker's Hill; and, soon or late, they were all shot down. Outside the works no one could live; and it was evident, almost from the first, that on this occasion likewise no one could penetrate within them. The British regiments once more fell back to the landing-place; a repulsed and disordered but, to their honour be it spoken, not a disorganised or a routed army.

For they had that in them which raised them to the level of a feat of arms to which it is not easy, and

* *Diary of a Cavalry Officer*, (Lieutenant Colonel Tomkinson,) page 317.

perhaps not even possible, to recall a parallel. Awful as was the slaughter of Albuera, the contest was eventually decided by a body, however scanty, of fresh troops. The cavalry which pierced the French centre at Blenheim had been hotly engaged but, for the most part, had not been worsted. But at Bunker's Hill every corps had been broken; every corps had been decimated several times over; and yet the same battalions, or what was left of them, a third time mounted that fatal slope with the intention of staying on the summit.* Howe had learned his lesson, and perceived that he was dealing with adversaries whom it required something besides the manœuvres of the parade ground to conquer. And to conquer, then and there, he was steadfastly resolved, in spite of the opposition which respectfully indeed, but quite openly, made itself heard around him. He ordered the men to unbuckle and lay down their knapsacks, to press forward without shooting, and to rely on the bayonet alone until they were on the inner side of the wall. He confined himself to a mere demonstration against the retired angle within which the rail-fence was situated, and instructed all his columns to converge upon the breastwork and the redoubt. He insisted that the artillery, swamp or no swamp, should be planted where they could sweep the fortification with an

* Howe was reinforced by four hundred additional Marines in the course of the engagement. But, so far as is known, every regiment which took part in the earlier attacks went forward the third time also.

enfilading fire. Howe was loyally obeyed, and ably seconded. The officers who had remonstrated with him for proposing to send the troops to what they described as downright butchery, when they were informed of his decision returned quietly to their posts, and showed by their behaviour that in protesting against any further bloodshed they had been speaking for the sake of their soldiers and not of themselves. General Clinton had assumed the command of the left wing, and was prepared to lead it into action. From across the water he had perceived two regiments standing about in confusion on the beach. He threw himself into a boat, revived their courage, re-arranged their ranks, and placed himself far enough in their front for everyone to see how an old aide-de-camp of the fighting Prince of Brunswick stepped up a glaxis.

It detracted nothing from the merit of the British that their undertaking was less desperate than they were aware of. They advanced for the third time in the stern belief that the position was held by a force superior in numbers to their own, and amply provided with everything which the defence required. But the case was otherwise. Behind the intrenchments few had bayonets; and, what was a much more serious matter, the powder-horns were empty. On the very eve of the last assault, by opening some cannon cartridges, Prescott contrived to supply his garrison with a couple of rounds a man, and bade them not to waste a kernel of it. Now was the moment for the arrival of those thou-

sands whom Warren had announced to be on the way; but they were on the way still, and not very many ever reached their destination. The result was largely due to the absence of a military system, which it remained for a younger brain than General Ward's to create, and a stronger hand than his to impose upon that civilian army. The Commander-in-Chief never left his house; he had not the staff officers to convey his orders; and those orders were given too late.* Plenty of troops marched, but they did not start betimes. When they reached the skirts of the battle they found no one with full powers to tell them where to go, and to see that they got there;—a circumstance the more serious because the conditions of the conflict were such that undisputed authority and responsible supervision were as much needed in the rear of the army as on the fighting front.

Burgoyne had watched the track of Clinton's boat with much the same feelings as those of FitzEustace when he saw Blount plunge into the *mêlée* at Flodden. "For my part," (thus he grumbled to one of his eminent

* In Colonel Stark's regiment, when the word came to turn out from their quarters, "each man received a gill cup full of powder, fifteen balls, and one flint. After this the cartridges were to be made up, and this occasioned much delay." And yet they were the first to arrive of all the reinforcements.

The ammunition was prepared in camp by the soldiers. David How of Haverhill has left a military diary curiously attractive by its meagre simplicity. "I have been a Running Ball all day;" he says on one occasion. "I went to prospeck hill after I had done my Stint Running Ball."

correspondents,) "the inferiority of my station left me an almost useless spectator, for my whole business lay in presiding during part of the action over a cannonade." But, in truth, he could not have been more usefully occupied. The fire of his batteries, though too distant to be very murderous, had a more decisive influence on the fate of the day than if he had been mowing down whole columns of infantry with grape discharged at point-blank range. To march through a tornado of round shot, across a narrow causeway and over a bare hill, into a torrent of British bullets which had flowed over the heads of those for whom they were intended, would have tried old and well-led troops. The spectators, who crowded every coign of vantage and safety, averred that Charlestown, whose wooden houses were going up to the sky in smoke and flame, added to the grandeur of the panorama. But that spectacle did not increase the attractions of the East end of the peninsula to those who approached it in the character of actors in the scene. Prescott had shown his good sense when he pronounced that a hungry and weary man who had endured a cannonade was worth more than any newcomer, however well he might have slept and breakfasted. Some of the regimental leaders missed their way. Others showed hesitation, and heard of it afterwards to their disadvantage. Many of the privates sought shelter after the undignified fashion, or an excuse for retiring in the disingenuous pretexts, which have been known even among professional

armies on some of the most famous days in history. They straggled, and dispersed themselves behind rocks, hay-cocks, and apple-trees; or they went back in large groups around any of their comrades who happened to be wounded. A captain of Connecticut militia noticed that, when he crossed the top of the hill, there was not one company except his own in any kind of order, although three battalions had started from camp at or about the same moment. Those battalions might have behaved very differently if the familiar figure of their own General of brigade or division had been there to conduct them through the zone of panic into the less intolerable ordeal of actual combat. Putnam, in the short intervals between the attacks, galloped back to do what he could. His exertions, however, were necessarily intermittent, and his title to command in some cases was disputed and denied. Part of the reserves advanced as far as the rail-fence, and did the good service which might be expected of men who found themselves at their posts because they wanted to be there, and not because they were told to go; but the brunt of the last onset mainly fell upon those who had been on the spot from the very first. Sooner or later, and for the most part all too late, four thousand of the colonial troops passed over Charlestown Neck; but in the opinion of Washington the Americans actually engaged at any one period of the day did not exceed fifteen hundred.

The injunctions both of Prescott and of Howe were

observed to the letter. Our people came on without discharging a shot, and it is hardly too much to say that every American bullet told. The front rank of the British went down close to the wall, and then those who came behind them were not long in going over it. In another moment the whole South side of the redoubt was bristling with bayonets; while, with their backs set against the opposite parapet, those colonists who had a pinch of powder remaining fired it off at the closest quarters. And then all was over. Without lead or steel, resistance would have been impossible even against soldiers of a very inferior sort to those who now were scrambling across the earthworks by hundreds. It was at this point of the battle that the Fifth Fusiliers were pronounced by a high authority to have "behaved the best, and suffered the most;" which was already an old story with that glorious regiment. Captain Harris, the young fellow who had been so keen to fight, was one of them; and when he was carried off the field to be trepanned, Lord Rawdon, no bad substitute, succeeded him in the command of his company. Among the foremost was Major Pitcairn,—the officer who at sunrise on the nineteenth of April had given the word to fire on Lexington Common, and whose noble and amiable disposition has been scrupulously recognised by American historians. He had been wounded twice before in the course of the afternoon; and he now died with four *balls in his body*, having spent his latest breath in *calling on his men* to show what the Marines could

do.* Other gallant leaders at Bunker's Hill, after seeing the battle through, fell in the very moment of success. Colonel Abercrombie, who had charge of the Grenadiers, was taken down to the boats mortally hurt, and feverishly entreating his comrades not to hang his old friend Putnam, because he was a brave fellow.

Whatever foolish and wrong things had been written or spoken before the event there was no cruelty, and no want of chivalry, between adversaries who had looked so close in each other's eyes. Within the circuit of the rampart the garrison left more dead than wounded upon the ground. But the first few minutes after an escalade cannot be regulated by the laws of a tournament; and determined men who resist to the last do so with the knowledge that they must take their chance of what will happen while blood is hot and the issue still doubtful. The wonder was that so many of the defenders went off alive and free. But the dry loose earth rose in clouds of dust, and in rear of the redoubt the intermingled throng of friends and foes was so dense that the British did not venture to fire. Prescott walked quietly through

* A youth named Oldfield, who had attached himself to Pitcairn, also received two wounds; but he lived to fight again, and often again, by sea and land as an officer in the famous corps with which at Bunker's Hill he had served as a volunteer. Fourteen years afterwards, at St. Jean d'Acre, he was interred in the trenches by the French, with his sword upon him, as a mark of esteem and admiration; and Napoleon, when a prisoner on board the *Northumberland*, spoke to the Marine officers of his extraordinary valour.

the tumult, parrying thrusts with his sword, much as his grandson's narrative describes Hernando Cortés on a certain day in the Great Square of Mexico. Thirty of his people were picked up by the British, badly injured though still living, and were not claimed as prisoners in the despatches. On no occasion has it been more signally proved than at Bunker's Hill how all but impossible it is to capture those who do not wish to surrender.*

It would have gone harder with the men from the fortification if the men at the rail-fence had behaved less stoutly. They stood until the retiring garrison had passed beyond the right of their line. Then they gave ground with a coolness and deliberation most creditable to young troops whose flank had been turned, and who were now learning that the first ten minutes of a retreat are sometimes more dangerous than the whole of a battle. For when the American array had disentangled itself from the mass of enemies, and presented a clear and safe mark, the worst moment of the day began. The volleys of the British infantry, and the salvoes from ship and battery in flank and rear, were not soon forgotten by those who were exposed to them. "The brow of Bunker's Hill," we are told, "was a place of great slaughter." It was there that Putnam, in lan-

* Gage, in his official letter, speaks of "thirty found wounded in the field, three of which are since dead." Some months afterwards special account was taken of ten among their number; and seven of the ten were no longer alive.

guage which came perilously near a breach of the rule against swearing in the Military Regulations of Massachusetts, adjured the colonists to make a stand and give them one shot more. Pomeroy, without a sword, but with a broken musket in his hand which did as well, took upon himself to see that his younger countrymen marched steadily past the point of danger. Warren never left the redoubt; for he fell where he had fought, and he was buried where he had fallen; a bright figure, passing out of an early chapter of the great story as unexpectedly and irrevocably as Mercutio from the play.* Pomeroy lamented that on a day when Warren,—ardent, hopeful, and eloquent,—had fallen, he himself, "old and useless," escaped unhurt. He had not long to wait. Having resigned his post of Brigadier-General, for which he no longer felt himself fit, Pomeroy became a regimental officer and, with his seventy years upon him, went campaigning in the Jerseys. A course of bivouacs brought him a pleurisy; and he died for America just as certainly as if, like his young friend, he had been shot through the head at Bunker's Hill.

A hundred and fifteen Americans lay dead across the threshold of their country. Their wounded numbered three hundred. Of six American cannon one

* Massachusetts Congress: June 19, 1775: "That three o'clock be assigned for the choice of a President of this Congress in the room of the Honourable Joseph Warren, supposed to be killed at the battle of Bunker's Hill."

was with difficulty dragged back to Cambridge; and under the circumstances even that was much. The British gave their own loss at a thousand and forty, of whom ninety-two bore the King's commission. That striking disproportion between leaders and followers was due to the gallantry of our officers, and the fatally discriminating aim of the minute-men. It reflected nothing whatever upon the conduct of the soldiers. Burgoyne indeed, in the first moment of surprise and pity, wrote home that the zeal and intrepidity of the commanders was ill seconded by the private men, among whom "discipline, not to say courage, was wanting." But in after days, when something of the same kind was alleged in the House of Commons, he indignantly refuted the charge. It may be presumed that, on thinking it over, he arrived at the conclusion that troops who, after losing three men out of every seven, walked up to the hostile intrenchments without breaking step or snapping a flint, had earned their day's pay honestly if ever soldiers did.

Our officers had looked for an easy victory, and had given much too free an expression to their anticipations. When the hour came they did not fight like braggarts; and they now manfully admitted that they had an adversary with whom it was an honour to measure themselves. "Damn the rebels, they would not flinch," was a form of words in which the most prejudiced subaltern paid his tribute to the colonists. And veterans of the royal army unanimously agreed that

the affair had been more serious than anything which they had seen at Minden, or had been told about Fontenoy.* A string of chaises and chariots, sent down to the water-side by the loyalists of the City, filed slowly back through the streets. "In the first carriage was Major Williams, bleeding and dying, and three dead captains of the Fifty-second Regiment. The second contained four dead officers; and this scene continued until Sunday morning, before all the wounded private men could be brought to Boston."** But the result of the engagement was small in comparison to the slaughter. General Gage was still on the wrong side of Charlestown Neck, looking across it at a range of heights stronger by nature, and much more elaborately fortified, than that grass-grown upland which was strewn so thickly with the flower of his army. It was a poor consolation to know that, as Nathaniel Greene put it, the colonists were always ready to sell him another hill at the same price. Burgoyne told the Ministry, plainly and at once, that the main position held by the enemy could not be carried by assault, and that, if the British garrison was ever to leave Boston, it must go by water. And Howe, who had been deeper in the carnage than Gage and Burgoyne, and whose memory contained a larger repertory of similar battles to compare it with,

* *American Archives*, from June 18, 1775, onward through July. It is noticeable, there and elsewhere, how habitually Minden was quoted as the standard of desperate fighting.

** *Lieutenant Clarke's Narrative*.

was never the same man again as when, standing on Charlestown beach among his picked companies, he gave the signal for the first onset. "The sad and impressive experience," (so we are told,) "of this murderous day sank deep into his mind." After Howe had succeeded to the supreme command, it exercised a permanent and most potent influence on the operations of the war. That joyous confidence and that eagerness to bring matters to an immediate issue, which had been his most valuable military endowments, thenceforward were apt to fail him at the very moment when they were especially wanted. Careless as ever of his personal safety, he was destined to lose more than one opportunity of decisive victory by unwillingness to risk his men's lives, and his own fame, against an intrenchment with American riflemen behind it.

CHAPTER X.

THE BESIEGERS. THE GARRISON. NAVAL OPERATIONS.

DEPRESSION reigned in the beleaguered city; but there was no exultation in the camp of the besiegers. In war as in politics, the morrow of an epoch-making event is not always a season of exhilaration. There is weariness and disappointment, and a consciousness that the thing has been incompletely done, and an uneasy suspicion that it had better never have been attempted. Bunker's Hill, next morning and for years to come, presented to the Colonists who had taken a share in it the aspect of something very much short of a Marathon. Contemporary accounts of the action, it has been justly said, were in a tone of apology or even of censure.* The affair produced a whole sheaf of court-martials; no one came forward to claim the credit of it; and, (what in New England was a most significant omission,) more than one Seventeenth of June came and went without a proposal being made to keep the day as an anniversary. The patriots had expected from the enterprise tactical advantages which it was not capable of yielding; and they

* This is one of the many points acutely perceived and powerfully illustrated by Mr. Fotheringham in his *Siege of Boston*.

did not yet perceive that, in its indirect results, it had been the making of their cause. The importance of what had happened was detected by their adversaries, and the most accurately by those who knew the country best. A gallant loyalist of Massachusetts, who fought so well for King George that he rose to be a full General in the British army, regarded Bunker's Hill as a transaction which controlled everything that followed. "You could not," he would say to his friends on the other side, "have succeeded without it. Something in the then state of parties was indispensable to fix men somewhere, and to show the planters of the South that Northern people were in earnest. That, *that* did the business for you." * "The rebels," Gage wrote a week after the battle, "are shown not to be the disorderly rabble too many have supposed. In all their wars against the French they have showed no such conduct and perseverance as they do now. They do not see that they have exchanged liberty for tyranny. No people were ever governed more absolutely than the American provinces now are; and no reason can be given for their submission but that it is tyranny which they have erected themselves." **

There was justice in these conclusions, though they were not expressed in friendly words. Bunker's Hill had exhibited the Americans to all the world as a

* The account of General John Coffin in Sabine's *Loyalists*: vol. II., page 325.

** Gage to Dartmouth; *Dartmouth MSS.*, vol. II., page 320.

people to be courted by allies, and counted with by foes; and it had done them the yet more notable service of teaching them some home-truths. It was a marvel that so many armed citizens had been got together so quickly, and a still greater marvel that they had stayed together so long. Even a Cabinet Minister could not now deny that as individuals they possessed the old courage of their race. They had displayed, moreover, certain military qualities of a new and special type, such as were naturally developed by the local and historical conditions under which they had been born and bred. But no one who passed the early hours of that summer afternoon on the hill over Charlestown, and still more no one who witnessed the state of things in rear of the position and among the headquarters staff at Cambridge, could be blind to the conviction that a great deal would have to be done, and undone, before the colonies were able to hold the field throughout the protracted struggle which was now inevitable. The material was there,—excellent, abundant, and ductile,—of a national army with features of its own deeply marked; but to mould that material into shape was a task which would have to be pursued under difficulties of unusual complexity. The artificer was already found. A second Continental Congress had assembled at Philadelphia on the tenth of May; and Colonel Washington, who from that day forward attended the sittings in his uniform, was Chairman of all the Committees appointed *to deal with military questions*. Just before the battle

took place, John Adams,—resolved to show that New Englanders would welcome a Virginian as their general, if a Virginian was the right man,—proposed that the assemblage of troops then besieging Boston should be adopted by Congress as a Continental Army, and indicated Colonel Washington as the officer best fitted to command it.

The suggestion was very generally approved, and in the end unanimously accepted. Washington was nominated as chief “of all the forces then raised, or that should be raised thereafter, in the United Colonies, or that should voluntarily offer their service for the defence of American liberty.” There was no stint in the terms of his commission; and he assumed the trust in a spirit that was a pledge of the manner in which he would fulfil it. He did not make a pretence of begging off; but once for all, and in simple and solemn terms, he desired his colleagues to note that he thought himself unequal to the charge with which he was honoured. He refused a salary, but agreed to take his actual personal expenses; and the accounts which he thenceforward kept for the information of Congress are a model for gentlemen who have nothing in the world to do except to post up their household and stable books. It was a fine example and one which, as the war progressed and brought corruption in its train, was every year more sorely needed. But Washington, according to his own views of what made life best worth having, surrendered *that for which he would not have been compensated by*

the emoluments of a Marlborough. "I am now," he said to his brother, "to bid adieu to you, and to every kind of domestic ease, for awhile. I am embarked on a wide ocean, boundless in its prospect, and in which perhaps no safe harbour is to be found." Mrs. Washington, like a true wife, took care to destroy before her death whatever written matter her husband had intended for her eyes alone; but she made an exception in the case of the letter announcing the news of his appointment. The world can read that letter as a whole, and it should never be read otherwise.*

Washington was the prototype of those great American generals in the War of Secession who, after receiving a thorough military education, retired into civil life because they loved it, or because the army in time of peace did not afford scope for their energies. Grant, Thomas, and Sherman had all been trained at West Point, had all served long enough to make themselves into practical soldiers, and had all left soldiering in order to seek more congenial or profitable work in other callings. Sheridan, alone among the Federal commanders of the first order, had a continuous military career; but he was too young to have gone from the army before the Civil War broke out. There had been no West Point for Washington; but the school which he had attended was not lax nor luxurious. Carrying his own knapsack; steering through floating ice a raft of logs which he had

* *The Writings of George Washington*, by Jared Sparks, vol. III., page 2.

hewn with his own hatchet; outwitting murderous Indians whom he was too humane to shoot when he had them at his mercy; and then, after he had penetrated the secrets of the wilderness, applying his knowledge to the demands of active service against the French enemy,—he learned as much as his famous successors ever gathered in the classes of their Academy or in their Mexican campaigns. Like them he laid aside his sword, after he had proved it. Like them he resumed it at the call of duty. Like them he was not less of a soldier, and much more of a statesman and administrator, than if he had spent the whole of his early manhood in the superintendence of a provincial arsenal or in the block-house of a frontier fort.

When Washington entered the boundaries of Massachusetts it became evident that the confidence evinced towards him by the representatives of New England at Philadelphia was shared by the great majority of their countrymen. The Provincial Assembly presented him with a congratulatory Address, and did not hesitate to admit, in the most uncompromising language, the arduous nature of the work which he had before him. Their troops, they confessed, were inexperienced and untrained, and required to be instructed in the most elementary obligations of the soldier. "The youth of the army," they said, "are not impressed with the absolute necessity of cleanliness in their dress and lodging, of continual *exercise* and strict temperance, to preserve them from *diseases* frequently prevailing in camps, especially among

those who from their childhood have been used to a laborious life." On arriving at Cambridge the Commander-in-Chief discovered a condition of matters for which his recollections of early colonial warfare had only in part prepared him. "I found," he said, "a mixed multitude of people under very little discipline, order, or government." It was true that they knew how to shoot; but, taking the force round, they had only nine cartridges a man. One other military accomplishment they possessed, and they had exercised it to good purpose. From the brigadiers downwards they all could dig; and in a marvellously short space of time they had thrown up a semi-circle of forts, extending over a front of ten miles, which effectually enclosed the garrison of Boston on the side of the mainland. Their industry in this department took no account of Sundays, and had something to do with that want of external smartness which attracted the unfavourable attention of their provincial Congress. General Putnam, for instance, who held that every virtue, even the second on the list, had its times and seasons, was toiling at the intrenchments of Prospect Hill on the morning of the eighteenth of June in the same clothes as he had worn on the sixteenth, and through the dust and smoke of the battle of the seventeenth. In answer to a sympathetic inquirer he allowed that he had not washed for eight and forty hours.

But by the end of June the immediate danger was over. The works had been so aptly planned, and so vigorously prosecuted, that the steady labour of another

week rendered them as good as impregnable. Towards the North, the key of the position was Prospect Hill: or Mount Pisgah, as these sons of Puritans preferred to call it when they surveyed from its commanding summit that which they now, in all the confidence of victory, regarded as the Promised City. At Roxbury to the South, opposite Boston Neck, the ground was rocky and the American engineers had made the most of their advantages. "Roxbury," an observer wrote, "is amazingly strong. It would puzzle ten thousand troops to go through it." Washington was able to muster fifteen thousand soldiers fit for duty; too few and too new for an attempt upon the British lines; but, as long as he could keep his numbers undiminished, amply sufficient to guard his own. There was a breathing-space, and he turned it to profit. In his first general order he reminded the troops that they were now a national army. "It is to be hoped," he wrote, "that all distinctions of colonies will be laid aside, so that one and the same spirit may animate the whole, and the only contest be who shall render the most essential service to the great common cause in which we are all engaged." He distributed the regiments into brigades and divisions, under the best commanders whom he could obtain, or at all events under the least bad of those whom he was obliged to take. Some generals were imposed upon him by the very circumstances which made them unsuitable or intractable. He could not get quit of Ward, who was *strong in the universal respect acquired by his all too*

ancient services. Charles Lee, whose pretensions and plausibilities, not yet brought to the proof, gained him an undeserved reputation in that homely civilian army, had usurped, and for many months continued to occupy, the secure ground of a man supposed to be indispensable. But in Greene and Putnam, Sullivan and Thomas, Washington had coadjutors of whom the first became, ere very long, equal to any responsibility which could be imposed upon him, and the others were thoroughly at home in every position below the very highest.

The motley host, all alive with independence and individuality, was housed in appropriate fashion. A pleasing representation of what he saw on the hillsides to the West of Boston has been left by the Reverend William Emerson of Concord; the member of a family where good writing was hereditary, and in which two generations after, it became united to lofty thought and a teeming imagination. "It is very diverting," the minister said, "to walk among the camps. They are as different in their form as the owners are in their dress; and every tent is a portraiture of the temper and taste of the persons who encamp in it. Some are made of boards, and some of sailcloth. Again, others are made of stone and turf, brick or brush. Some are thrown up in a hurry; others curiously wrought with doors and windows, done with wreaths and withes, in the manner of a basket. Some are your proper tents and marquees, looking like the regular camp of the enemy. I think

this great variety is rather a beauty than a blemish in the army."

In the eyes of the Commander in Chief, however, there was a limit to the advantages of the picturesque. The troops might lodge themselves according to their fancy; but he was determined that their superiors should have a voice in settling how they were to be clothed. The men provided their own raiment; and they were perpetually trading and swapping their habiliments and even their accoutrements, or they would not have been New Englanders.* Those who possessed a uniform had not yet learned to take a pride in it, as was shown on the seventeenth of June by some Connecticut troops who behaved very creditably in the battle. "We marched," their commander wrote, "with our frocks and trowsers on over our other clothes, (for our company is in blue, turned up with red,) for we were loath to expose our-

* All through the siege, and for some time afterwards, David How's Diary gives a minute account of the traffic which went on in the cantonments.

"Feb. 3, 1776. I drawd a pare of Bretches out of the Stores price 27s 6d.

"Feb. 6. I let David Chandler have my Breaches that I drawd out of the Stores.

"Feb. 26. I sold my Cateridge box for 4s 6d Lawfull money.

"March 12. William Parker made me a pair of Half Boots. I sold William Parker my old Half Boots for Two Shilling and 3d.

"May 27. William Parker made me a pare of Shoes." It may be mentioned that Parker was a private in the same company as the writer.

"June 29. I went to for teag" (fatigue) "this Day. I bought a pare of trouses of Sergt. Camble price 9s. I sold A pare of Trousers To Nathan Peabody price 10s."

selves by our dress." Washington reported to Congress that the provision of some sort of Regulation costume was an urgent necessity. "A number of hunting-shirts, not less than ten thousand, would remove this difficulty in the cheapest and quickest manner. I know nothing in a speculative view more trivial, yet which if put in practice would have a happier tendency to unite the men, and abolish those provincial distinctions which lead to jealousy and dissatisfaction." Meanwhile he did his best, with the store of finery which was at his disposal, to establish the outward signs of a military hierarchy. Under a General Order, Sergeants were to carry a stripe of red cloth on the right shoulder, and Corporals one of green. A field officer mounted a red cockade, and a Captain a yellow cockade. Generals were desired to wear a pink riband, and Aides-de-camp a green riband; while the person of the Commander-in-Chief was marked by a light blue sash worn across his breast between coat and waistcoat. As long as the head of the army was Washington, he needed no insignia to distinguish him. Whether on foot or in the saddle, wherever his blue coat with buff facings was seen,—on a Sunday parade, or as he galloped through the bullets to meet and lead back into the fire a retreating regiment,—he looked, every one of his many inches, the king of men that nature had made him. Those on whom his countenance was turned in battle, in council, or in friendly intercourse, never doubted that the mind within *was worthy of that stately presence.* "I was struck

with General Washington," wrote Mrs. Adams to her husband. "You had prepared me, but I thought the half was not told me. Dignity, with ease and complacency, the gentleman and the soldier, look agreeably blended in him. Modesty marks every line and feature of his face."

On grounds of policy, and from the bent of his disposition, the Commander-in-Chief missed no opportunity for such spectacles and pageants as the exigencies of the time allowed. "There is great overturning in the camp," Emerson wrote, "as to order and regularity. New Lords, new laws. The Generals Washington and Lee are upon the lines every day. New orders from his Excellency are read to the respective regiments every morning after prayers." One of those Orders required and expected of all officers and soldiers, not engaged on actual duty, a punctual attendance at Divine Service, to implore the blessings of Heaven upon the means used for the public safety and defence. These religious gatherings were occasionally enlivened by a touch of genial enthusiasm. On the eighteenth of July a message from Congress was read to the troops on Prospect Hill; "after which an animated and pathetic address was made by the Chaplain to General Putnam's regiment; and was succeeded by a pertinent prayer. General Putnam gave the signal, and the whole army shouted their loud Amen by three cheers; immediately on which a cannon was fired from *the fort, and the standard lately sent to General Putnam*

flourished in the air." On the banner was inscribed a short and telling Latin phrase, implying that He who had brought the fathers across the ocean would not forget the children.* Against one ceremony which, it is to be feared, was more popular among New England troops than any other, Washington set his face resolutely; for he would not permit them to burn the Pope. There were so few Catholics in the army that the General did not refer to their presence as a reason for disappointing his soldiers of a treat which they had so often relished in their native villages. He based his decision on the importance to the colonies of doing nothing to alienate the French Canadians, whose friendship and alliance the statesmen at Philadelphia had not yet despaired of securing.

Washington knew that something more than sermons and celebrations was required to make an aggregation of human beings into an obedient army. "The strictest government," said Mr. Emerson, "is taking place, and great distinction is made between officers and soldiers. Everyone is made to know his place, and keep in it." Discipline and morality were maintained and vindicated with less of indulgence and connivance, but with a far smaller amount of cruelty, than prevailed in European camps. Loose women were expelled from the lines, marauding was severely checked, and corporal punishments were inflicted; though, (in a community where everything was regulated on Scriptural precedents,) the

* "Qui Transtulit Sustinet."

number of lashes appears never to have exceeded thirty-nine.* Rogues were in terror, and laggards found it their interest to bestir themselves. But honest fellows who did not shirk their duty enjoyed life as it never has been enjoyed in any campaign, the familiar details of which have been noted with equal minuteness. All arrangements which bore upon the health and the comforts of the private men were diligently taken in hand by their commander. Regimental officers were made answerable for seeing that every dwelling where soldiers lived was cleaned every morning. Camp kitchens were built; very great care was given to the cookery; and there was plenty to cook. "I doubt not," King George wrote to Lord Dartmouth, "but the twenty thousand provincials are a magnified force occasioned by the fears of the correspondent. Should the numbers prove true it would be highly fortunate, as so large a

* "Feb. 7. This Day two men In Cambridge got a bantering who would Drink the most, and they Drunk so much That one of them Died In About one houre or two after.

"Feb. 10. There was two women Drumd out of Camp this fore noon. That man was Buried that killed himself drinking.

"March 27. There was four of Capt. Willey's men Whept, the first fifteen stripes for denying his Deuty: the 2^d 39 stripes for Stealing and deserting: 3^d 10 lashes for geting Drunk and Denying Duty: 4^d 20 lashes Denying his Duty and geting Drunk.

"May 1. One of Capt. Pharinton's men Was whipt 20 lashes for being absent at rool Call without Leave.

"May 26. This Night Mical Bary was whipt 39 Stripes for being absent at rool Call."

"July 12. Two of Capt. Pharinton's men was whipt 39 lashes for Braking open A house and Stealing Att Boston."—*David How's Diary*.

corps must soon retire to their respective homes for want of subsistence." But there was very little prospect of such a termination to the war; for the Provincial Assembly was determined that the defenders of the colony should be well on the right side of starvation. The Massachusetts soldier received every day a pound of bread, half a pound of beef and half a pound of pork, together with a pint of milk, a quart of "good spruce or malt beer," and a gill of peas or beans. A pound and a quarter of salt fish was substituted for the meat on one day in the seven. Every week there were served out half a dozen ounces of butter, and half a pint of vinegar, (if vinegar was to be had,) to each of the men, and one pound of good common soap among six of them. Nor was that all. Supplies poured into the camp; and the soldiers bought largely and judiciously, eating and drinking freely of what they could not sell again at a profit. In the course of eight days the caterer of a single mess purchased three barrels of cider; seven bushels of chestnuts; four of apples, at twelve shillings a bushel; and a wild turkey for supper, which weighed over seventeen pounds.* It may safely be said that his Majesty, who set a praiseworthy example of abstinence in the midst of a gouty generation, would as soon have thought of consuming the whole of the daily ration which was placed before his rebellious subjects as of adopting their political tenets.

* *David How's Diary*; January 24 to 31, 1776.
The American Revolution. II.

Within the city good eating was almost a thing of the past. Before the end of July Washington had learned that the British troops were insufficiently and badly fed, and that their health suffered. Captain Stanley, who as a son of Lord Derby would command the best which might be had for money, mentioned in a letter that he had only tasted fresh meat twice since his arrival in Boston.* The wounded men, he said, recovered very slowly indeed upon a diet which, even if no battle had taken place, would soon have filled the hospitals. A local merchant,—writing to his brother with a latitude of virulence which, in times of danger and discord, civilian partisans too often allow themselves,—stated positively that, when the ammunition in the pouches of the rebels on Bunker's Hill was examined, the balls were found to be poisoned. But no military man believed or repeated a slander, quite superfluous for the purpose of explaining the high rate of mortality which prevailed in the garrison. Our soldiers took what came as the fortune of war; and the fortune of war was very hard. Sick or well, whole or hurt, they had nothing to eat but salt pork and peas, with an occasional meal of fish. "An egg was a rarity," and their wretched diet was never mended by so much as a vegetable or a

* According to the American satirists the Commander-in-Chief himself was no better off than his regimental officers. In a contemporary poem Gage is represented as exclaiming;

*"Three weeks,—Ye Gods! nay, three long years it seems
Since roast beef I have touched, except in dreams."*

drop of milk. What fresh beef there was in the town had been obtained by slaughtering milch cows which could not have been kept alive in the increasing dearth of forage. The daily deaths never sank below ten, and sometimes rose to thirty. From July onwards, to prevent discouragement, no bells were allowed to toll. As summer changed to autumn and autumn to winter, the distress, sharp everywhere, became extreme in private families; and those were not few, for between six and seven thousand of the population had remained in the town. Fresh meat in July cost fifteen pence a pound, and by the middle of December that price had to be paid for salt provisions. The King's stores ran so very short that no flour or pulse could be spared for the use of non-combatants. It was bitterly cold, and all the fuel had been burned away. That want was met by an expedient which excited painful feelings among the loyalist exiles across the ocean,* and was a cruel sight indeed for people who were still in their native city because they loved it so that they could not bear to leave it. All of Charlestown which had survived the conflagration was first pulled down and issued to the regiments for firewood; and then the troops proceeded to help themselves from the fences of the Boston gardens and the doors and rafters of the Boston houses. The British General sent the Provost Marshal on his rounds, accompanied by an executioner, and armed with powers to hang on the spot any man who was caught in the act.

* *Curwen's Journal*; Feb. 15, 1776.

of wrecking a dwelling-house. But the authorities continued to do on a system what the soldiers had begun under the spur of necessity. A hundred wooden buildings were marked for demolition; and hatchet and crow-bar were steadily plied until the arrival of a fleet of colliers from the Northern English ports spared Boston any further taste of the destiny which had overtaken her humble neighbour beyond the ferry.

It was sad work at the best; and all the more hateful to Bostonians because it afforded a pretext for mortifying the richer members of the popular party whose circumstances had enabled them to leave the town, and those poorer patriots who had no choice but to stay there. A fine old elm, which went by the name of Liberty Tree, had during ten years served the public as a rallying place for political gatherings. Fourteen cords of firewood were now obtained from the venerable trunk. Sons of Liberty, all the continent over, consoled themselves by knowing, or at all events by believing, that a soldier had met his death in falling from the branches while engaged upon what they regarded as an act of sacrilege.* It was perhaps too much to expect that the

* The catastrophe was celebrated in the kind of verses which somebody at all times can be found to write, and which, during a period of national excitement, even sensible men contrive to read.

“Each, axe in hand, attacked the honoured tree,
Swearing eternal war with Liberty.
But e'er it fell, not mindless of its wrong,
Avenged it took one destined head along.

notorious tree would be spared in the hour of retribution by redcoats who had so often been roundly abused beneath its spreading foliage. But worse things were done, with far less excuse. The old North Chapel had stood for a hundred years, and, relatively to the duration of the city, was as much a piece of antiquity as St. Albans Abbey or Beverley Minister. It was now taken down and sent in smoke, with all its memories and associations, up the chimneys of a hundred barrack-rooms. The steeple of the West Church, built of large timbers, underwent the same fate.

Little love was lost between the British authorities and the minister and deacons of the old South Chapel, which had been frequently lent to the patriots for town meetings. The parsonage was destroyed, mercifully and at once; but the church was treated as too bad for burning. The nave was made over to the cavalry as a place in which to exercise their horses. Pulpit and seats were cut in pieces. Earth and gravel were spread

A Tory soldier on its topmost limb,—
The genius of the shade looked stern at him,
And marked him out that self-same hour to dine
Where unsnuffed lamps burn low at Pluto's shrine."

There were smaller Liberty Trees in other quarters of the city. On May 4, 1766, John Adams wrote:

"Sunday. Returning from meeting this morning I saw for the first time a likely young button-wood tree, lately planted on a triangle made by three roads. The tree is well set, well guarded, and has on it an inscription,

'The tree of Liberty, and cursed is he who cuts this tree!'
What will be the consequences of this thought? I hear that some persons grumble, and threaten to girdle it."

over the floor; a leaping-bar was set up; the gallery was fitted as a refreshment room for spectators; and the stoves were fed with the contents of a library, the pride of the connection to whom the chapel belonged. The responsibility for this desecration, justly or unjustly, was laid at the doors of General Burgoyne. He had offended a people with quick tongues and long memories. Two years afterwards, when he entered Boston as a prisoner, he called the attention of his staff to a public building beneath which they were passing, as having been formerly the residence of the Governor. A voice in the crowd quietly observed that, when they got round the next corner, they would see the Riding-school. Burgoyne took that remark like a man who loved a jest; but he subsequently confessed that at another point of his route he had been for a moment disconcerted by learning that the first sentence which he was known to have uttered after reaching America had not yet been forgotten. As the procession filed with difficulty through the ranks of a populace good-humoured, but obtrusively curious, an old lady called out from the top of a shed; "Make way! Make way! Give the General elbow-room!"

It was a miserable life inside Boston for troops who had sailed from England in the belief that they were to take part in a triumphant and leisurely progress through a series of rich and repentant provinces. The horses soon became useless from want of food; a circumstance always predominant among the material causes which destroy the efficiency of a blockaded army. Moral

deterioration began to be observed among the soldiers, whose spring and energy were slowly and stealthily undermined by the depressing character of the existence which they were condemned to lead. No one could show himself outside the earthworks without having a bullet through him; and the men on guard within them carried their lives in their hand at every moment. Generals bred in the traditions of European warfare complained of the proceedings of the colonists as ungenerous and unprofessional. In July and August the Southern riflemen marched into Washington's camp,—stout hardy men, in white frocks and round hats,—who had trudged four, five, or even seven hundred miles to have a shot at the regulars; and who were determined not to be baulked of it however much Prince Ferdinand and Marshal de Contades, many years back and thousands of miles away, would have been shocked at such a departure from the honourable amenities of a campaign. On the way North they had shown off their skill at a review. One of their companies, while advancing in skirmishing order, had put a good proportion of balls into a mark seven inches broad at a distance of two hundred and fifty yards. They now posted themselves in ambush, five or six of them behind as many neighbouring trees, and watched for a favourable chance at a British sentry as they had been accustomed to wait upon the movements of a deer in the forests of South Carolina.

Cooped up within two promontories, which were like small islands without the security of an insular position, our soldiers lost their health and spirits, and after awhile something of their self-respect. Scurvy showed itself. Smallpox raged in the streets and cantonments; and the British commanders were of opinion that Washington, on that ground alone, even if he had not still better reasons, would think twice and thrice before he should assault the town. When winter was half over the rank and file no longer retained the smart appearance which was then, even more than now, the delight of regimental officers. Hats without binding, and shirts without frills; unpowdered hair, unwashed linen, and unbuttoned gaiters, formed the subject of denunciation in General Orders. And that nothing might be wanting, some of the privates went so far as to borrow from the enemy that habit which was the least worthy of imitation, and chewed tobacco when they came on duty. The British Commander-in-Chief was far from indifferent to these deviations from the recognised standard of military perfection; and he was stern and inflexible when the demoralisation, of which they were the symptoms, took the shape of violence and spoliation directed against the inhabitants of the city. Subordination was preserved, and crime kept in check, by that form of punishment which had become so much of an institution in our fighting services that officers, who otherwise were neither unjust nor unkindly, altogether lost sight of the distinc-

tion between severity and barbarity. Sentences were passed, and carried out, of four hundred, six hundred, one thousand lashes.

There was one General in Boston who viewed these excesses of rigour with disapprobation. Burgoyne held that harshness was seldom required for the government of men who were habitually treated by their superiors with discrimination and sympathy. He hated flogging. Wherever he commanded he exercised his artistic ingenuity in order to find a substitute for that penalty; and when, according to the ideas of the time, it could not be dispensed with, he took care that it was inflicted in a measure carefully regulated by the gravity of the offence. A splendid disciplinarian of the right sort, he kept his officers in order, and they liked him all the better for it. He had learned by experience that that was the surest method of keeping order among the privates. According to Burgoyne, the captain and the subalterns between them should be acquainted with the disposition and the merits of every man in the company, and were not to be contented with noting down his height, the girth of his chest, and the number of times his name had appeared on the defaulters' list. "To succeed," he said, "where minds are to be wrought upon requires both discernment and labour. Admitting that English soldiers are to be treated as thinking beings, the reason will appear of getting insight into the character of each particular man, and proportioning ac-

cordingly the degrees of punishment and encouragement." *

Burgoyne now did his best to divert the monotony of the siege, and to show the troops that, since good victuals had run short, their superiors were all the more anxious to cater for their amusement. Faneuil Hall, where the people had assembled both after the Boston Massacre and before the destruction of the tea, was converted into a theatre. The idea of turning the cradle of liberty to such a use did not escape censorious comment; but it must be remembered that Boston was a city where it was not easy to find any capacious building, sacred or profane, in which a political meeting had never been held. The company gave the tragedy of Tamerlane; some modern comedies; and a piece of occasion entitled the Blockade, in which the person of Washington was caricatured with a flippancy which the course of events soon rendered unfashionable even among his adversaries. Burgoyne contributed a prologue, spoken by a very young nobleman who had distinguished himself on the seventeenth of June. "Lord Rawdon," said Burgoyne, "behaved to a charm. His name is established for life." That life was long, and so varied and stirring that it reads like the story of as many separate men as

* Burgoyne, in the fulness of time, had an able biographer in the late Mr. Edward Barrington de Fonblanque. Mr. de Fonblanque was in our own days a wise, perfectly informed, and (for he was a permanent official in the War Department) a singularly courageous military reformer. He wrote quite as well as might be expected from a nephew of the famous editor of the "Examiner."

the three names by which he who lived it was successively called. Always to the front in a fight, and the last in a retreat, Lord Rawdon proved himself a brilliant and successful partisan leader in the war which now was opening. As Lord Moira he was an orator for many a long year at Westminster, and in the House of Peers of Ireland, as long as Ireland had one; a prominent and a popular statesman, and a good friend of Fox and of liberty, at a time when they both wanted friends badly. And far into the next century, as a Governor-General too old to lead his own armies, Lord Hastings organised conquest on a scale which dazzled his countrymen, and terrified his employers on the board of the East India Company. After he had taught a lesson to Nepaul, and had finally and effectually broken the power of the Mahrattas,—perhaps the greatest single service which our rule has conferred on our Eastern dependency,—it may well be believed that he but dimly remembered what his sensations were when he found himself on the right side of the breastwork at Bunker's Hill, with two bullet-holes in his hat, and his reputation made.

George the Third was not long in showing what he considered to be the practical value of the victory which his troops had gained. As soon as the news reached Kew he at once desired that General Gage should turn over the command to Howe, and sail for England in order to inform the Ministry as to what supplies and reinforcements the army wanted for carrying on the next campaign. It was a kindly pretext, devised to spare

the feelings of an unprofitable, but a faithful and a brave servant.* In recalling that ill-starred commander, the King acted on his own first and most just impressions. He made up his mind without waiting to read a letter containing Burgoyne's enumeration of the points wherein Gage failed to resemble Julius Cæsar, especially in the wise munificence with which the great Roman dispensed public money to his deserving lieutenants. Burgoyne himself went home in November, having been summoned back by royal command because his advice was really wanted. Before, however, the two Generals departed from Boston they were engaged on one more joint literary undertaking. Washington had addressed to the British Commander-in-Chief a remonstrance against the denial to American officers, who had been taken prisoners, of the privileges and alleviations due to their rank. Gage's reply was worded by Burgoyne. "Britons," he wrote, "ever pre-eminent in mercy, have overlooked the criminal in the captive. Your prisoners, whose lives by the law of the land are destined to the cord, have hitherto been treated with care and kindness;—indiscriminately it is true, for I acknowledge no rank that is not derived from the King." The author might well have stopped here; but the opportunity was irresistible, and he proceeded to inflict upon Washington, as a person only too likely to need it, a lecture on the obligation of scrupulous truthfulness. When the rough copy had been fairly

* Not very long ago a gold medal, presented to Gage by the Duke of Cumberland after Culloden, was sold at auction for 230*l*.

written out, the letter was addressed to George Washington Esquire; and the notoriety obtained by this superscription is the cause that the effusion itself, unfortunately for Burgoyne, has been more read than all his dramas and epilogues together.

The authorities in England had not foreseen the privations which our troops in Boston were so early called upon to endure. It was difficult to understand that the army of a great sea-power, strongly established in a seaport town, would at the very commencement of hostilities be faring no better than the sailors on board an ill-found East Indiaman in the last days of a long voyage. The crops and live-stock, on the islands alone, might have been counted upon to stave off scurvy until such time as the harbour was crowded with provision-ships attracted from far and near by the prospect of a splendid market. But on her own element Great Britain was poorly served; and, in a species of warfare where personal qualities went for everything, the skill, the energy, and the daring were to a preponderating degree on the side of the insurgents. On the fifteenth of July the colonels of American regiments were directed to report the names of men in their respective corps who were expert in the management of whaleboats.* The House of Commons which, in spite of all that Charles Fox could say, had insisted on driving New England

* *American Archives. Writings of George Washington:* vol. III. Appendix x.

fishermen from the prosecution of their calling, had made it certain that the list of the volunteers would in every case be a long one. A large fleet of these boats had already been brought overland from Cape Cod, and from the towns lying between that point and Boston. The vessels were fitted out in the Cambridge and the Mystic rivers, and before another week was over they were busy in the bay. Thenceforward the men in the garrison got no fresh food, and the horses neither fresh nor dry. The colonists seized what remained of the flocks and herds. They cut the standing grass, and loaded up their barges from the hay-ricks. They came off the best in their encounters with the British soldier, who could do himself little justice in operations for which he had not been trained; and in which, as he complained, assistance and guidance did not come from the quarter where he had a right to look for them. "The Admiral," so a General wrote, "must take to himself a great share of our inactivity, our disgrace, and our distress. The glaring facts are not to be concealed; that many vessels have been taken, officers killed, men made prisoners; that large numbers of swift boats have been supplied to the enemy, in which they have insulted and plundered islands immediately under the protection of our ships, and at noonday landed in force and set fire to the lighthouse almost under the guns of two or three men-of-war."

For the British squadron was not efficient. It had been put in commission, and dispatched to America,

under an impression that its duties would be confined to warning merchantmen not to enter the harbour of Boston, and to intimidating the idle and famished mariners who crowded her quays by the rows of cannon which protruded from its portholes. Too few sloops and gun-boats had been provided; and the crews both of large ships and small were on a peace establishment which, (before the days of Continuous Service,) fell much below the complements carried in time of war. The belief that America would take her punishment submissively was an article of the Ministerial creed which no one at the Board of Admiralty ventured to dispute. As one very serious consequence of that delusion, the fleet, and not a few of the vessels composing it, were indifferently commanded. Unaware that he had already to deal with an active and amphibious rebellion, and that several great wars were in the near future, the Earl of Sandwich gave full scope to private and political favouritism in his management of the Service for whose condition, and in no small degree for whose honour, he was responsible. Clever and industrious, he had the Navy List by heart; and he knew the opinions, and the family and social connections, of his Admirals and Post-Captains as familiarly and thoroughly as ever Mr. John Robinson knew his Members of Parliament. Eminent officers, who held with Rockingham, were not in request at Whitehall; and there was a still blacker mark against the names of those veterans who had illustrated by their achievements the Ministry of Lord Chatham, and who

repaid his gratitude and esteem with a personal loyalty which cost them dear.*

Their place was taken by men of a much lower order; among whom the two flag-officers successively appointed to the American station were conspicuous, the one by his insolence and indiscretion, and the other by his incompetency. Admiral Montagu had done a great deal to provoke the rebellion, and Admiral Graves did nothing whatever to quell it. "It may be asked in England," said Burgoyne, "what is the admiral doing? I wish I were able to answer that question satisfactorily; but I can only say what he is *not* doing." The array of instances by which charges of procrastination, want of spirit, and professional incapacity were supported would have been formidable in the hands of any accuser; and, as unfolded by Burgoyne, the indictment was as portentous in length as it was damning in force and accuracy.** But nothing that was done or neglected in American waters had escaped the eye of a master who never pardoned slackness in himself or others. "I do think the Admiral's removal as necessary, if what is reported is founded, as the mild General's." So the King wrote to Lord North in the summer; and, before the winter was through, Graves had been deprived of

* Captain Mahan, in his account of the operations at sea between 1775 and 1783, remarks that, with the notable exception of Rodney, almost all the distinguished admirals of the time were Whigs,—“a fact unfortunate for the naval power of England.”

** *Life and Correspondence of Burgoyne*, by E. B. de Fonblanque; pages 197, 198.

his command. He was preceded to England by the news, or it may be the rumour, of the only bit of fighting in which he was personally engaged,—a scuffle in the street of Boston with an official of the revenue. He considered himself to have been badly treated by the Government, and evinced his resentment in a manner which was honourable to him. Having refused a lucrative post on shore, he passed the short remainder of his days in a retirement which he made it to be understood that nothing except a call to active service would induce him to quit.*

Before the Admiral received his letter of recall the mischief was already done. The colonists had not been slow to catch at an opportunity when the interests of Great Britain were entrusted to a squadron which was ill-provided and worse commanded; and the American navy came into being during the second half of the year 1772. The first vessels sailed beneath the pine-tree flag. The emblem was appropriately chosen; because the service, which fought its earliest battles under that

* Popular report made out Graves to be absurd as well as unsuccessful; for the opposite of a hero, like a hero, is usually something of a mythical personage. It has been related in print how, on his elevation to the peerage, he chose a Latin motto to the effect that an eagle does not stoop to flies; and how the wags translated it as meaning that a Vice-Admiral need not concern himself with whaleboats. As a matter of fact, the peerage was bestowed not on Samuel Graves, but on Thomas Graves, who earned it gloriously on the First of June, and who was always ready for anything which came in his way, from a long-boat to a couple of three-deckers.

ensign, struck its own roots and grew up of itself. In every colony (since all touched the ocean somewhere) there were shipowners whose whalers and coasters were laid up in harbour; merchants whose capital was producing nothing; whole villages of seafaring people with their occupation gone. Rhode Island had two cruisers afloat in July, and on the first of the same month the Assembly of Connecticut authorised the equipment of two others. The Congressmen of Massachusetts had been the first to recognise the necessity of a fleet; but Bunker's Hill diverted their attention to the war on land, and the subject was allowed to sleep. Soon, however, the hand of the Provincial authorities was forced by individuals who put to sea without letters of marque; and who, while the enemy classed them as pirates, had not the status of privateers even in the eyes of their own Government. Moved by the danger to their necks which these adventurous patriots had cheerfully incurred, the Assembly at Concord hastened to legalise the employment of armed ships, and proceeded to establish a Court for the trial and condemnation of prizes.

The prime-mover in the creation of a national marine was the man most intimately acquainted with the broad aspects of the military position, and most deeply concerned in the issue. Washington, outstepping the attributes of his office in substance, but careful to observe them in form, directed "a captain in the army of the united colonies of North America to take command of a detachment of the said army, and proceed on board

the schooner Hannah at Beverley."* The Congress at Philadelphia was not in a mood to get up a quarrel with their General for exceeding his powers. Urged by his importunity, and fired by his example, they armed and manned six schooners, which by the end of October were chasing and being chased in and about Massachusetts Bay. A permanent Committee, with John Adams upon it, was appointed for the supervision of naval affairs; a code of regulations was drawn up and issued to the squadron; and skippers and mates in sufficient number were duly commissioned as Captains and Lieutenants of the Continental Navy. Washington, however, to all intents and purposes continued to act as Admiral, until Captain Manly of the Lee by the audacity of his enterprises was marked out to the judgment of America for her first Commodore.

It was evident from a very early date that the new sea-power had an instinctive grasp of the good old methods. The American commanders were fully alive to the truth of the famous proverb which passes as the last word of military wisdom, though it is not certain to which of the world's great warriors the original invention of it should be attributed. They knew that in order to make omelettes eggs must be broken, and that a captain cannot hope to bring his adversary's ship into port unless he will run the risk of losing his own. A rapid series of successes, chequered by disaster, formed a worthy commencement to the history of a navy which

* *The Writings of George Washington*, vol. III., Appendix x.

has always done an amount of fighting quite extraordinary in proportion to the national money that has been spent upon it. The public in London, when it cared to visit the Admiralty, was very soon treated to a look at a captured pine-tree flag; and on the other hand Manly alone, to say nothing of his consorts, in the course of four months intercepted stores sufficient to have victualled his squadron many times over, and almost enough liquor to float his little flagship. A vessel laden with a hundred butts of porter; a brigantine whose cargo included a hundred and thirty-nine hogsheads of rum, and a hundred cases of right Geneva; a sloop with Indian corn, potatoes and oats; two Whitehaven ships with coal and potatoes; two large merchantmen carrying provisions for the British garrison,—these were some, and by no means the most valuable, of the Commodore's prizes.

When the condition of the besieged troops became known in England, the Ministry endeavoured to supply their wants by means of a profuse expenditure. Five thousand oxen, (so it was computed by a very well-informed writer,) fourteen thousand of the largest and fattest sheep, and a huge consignment of hogs were purchased, and sent out alive. Vegetables of all kinds were cured by a new process, and stowed away in the holds. Five thousand caldrons of coal were shipped, along with the very faggots required to kindle them; oats, beans, and hay for the horses; and near half a million of money in Spanish and Portuguese coinage.

The employment given in many and diverse quarters by this feverish activity; the shares in lucrative contracts allotted to men of rank and fashion, ignorant of business, who had never before in their lives sold anything except their votes in Parliament; the fervent and expectant gratitude of brewers who supplied ten thousand butts of strong beer, and of merchants who provided shipping at a fourth above the usual rate for tonnage; —all these circumstances added political strength to the Government. But at that point the public advantage stopped. The transports sailed too late in the season, and contrary gales kept them long near our own shores. The preserved vegetables fermented and were thrown overboard. The waves were so tempestuous that the greater part of the animals perished, and the tides carried their carcasses in thousands up and down the Channel. As the vessels neared their destination, the periodical winds set in and blew full in their teeth. Some were driven off to the West Indian Islands. Others drifted towards the American coasts, and were boarded and plundered in the creeks to which they resorted for shelter. Those which survived, after beating the seas for three or four months, found themselves, with leaking sides and rotten cordage, on the cruising ground of a hostile navy the first notice of whose existence reached them through a shot fired across their own bows. Time, and no very long time, had brought about the due revenges; and Boston had become a closed port in

a sense which Parliament never contemplated or intended.*

The supineness of the British naval commanders during the first period of the war was less detrimental to the royal cause than their occasional ebullitions of sinister energy. On the fifteenth of October 1775 George the Third assured Lord North, in a sentence never yet forgotten beyond the Atlantic, that he would concur in any plan which could be devised with the object of "distressing America." A week afterwards a despatch went from Downing Street recommending that the rebels should be annoyed by sudden and unexpected attacks of their seaboard towns during the winter; and directing the total destruction of any place, large or small, in which the people assembled in arms, or held meetings of committees or congresses. Charles the First, who has sometimes been called a tyrant, but who fought his civil war as became an English King, would on these grounds have been justified in utterly demolishing Bristol and Leicester, and (if he once could have got inside them) Norwich, Gloucester, Cambridge, and London itself.

Already something had been done in anticipation of the Ministerial policy. On the middle day of October Captain Mowatt had sailed into the port of Falmouth, in that part of Massachusetts which afterwards became the state of Maine, and had poured a shower of grenades and shells upon the unprotected streets of the little

* *Annual Register for 1776*; chapter II. of the *History of Europe*.

community. Some wooden houses were soon in a blaze, and Marines were landed to prevent the fire from being extinguished. The church, the public buildings, and three-fourths of the dwellings perished; all the vessels in the harbour were sunk or carried off; and the inhabitants were left, homeless and without the means of escape, to the approaching rigours of a Northern winter in that remote and (when the sea was blockaded) all but inaccessible region. The members of the Continental Congress were then waiting for a reply to the Address in which they had appealed to the King to stand their friend, in spite of the prejudice and animosity entertained by Parliament against his subjects in America. The tidings from Falmouth reached Philadelphia on the same day as the news that the British Government was raising an army of German mercenaries to be employed against the revolted colonies. These two pieces of intelligence, by their simultaneous effect, killed outright all hope, or even desire, of conciliation. "Brother rebel," said a Southern delegate to one of his New England colleagues, "I am ready to declare ourselves independent. We have now got a sufficient answer to our petition."

The doom of Falmouth was a foretaste of what the Northern colonies had to expect; and the lesson was next taught in another quarter. Norfolk, at the mouth of the James River, had for many years been the seat of a brisk and mutually profitable trade with the West of Scotland in the staple commodity of Virginia. Near

sixty thousand hogsheads of tobacco were annually brought into the Clyde; and most of them were shipped from the estuary of the James. The town was largely owned by merchants whose warehouses lined Virginia Street in Glasgow. Their clerks and factors formed that part of the population of Norfolk which was most in evidence; especially since the troubles began, and the partisans of the Revolution had retired into the interior of the country. These good Scotchmen, if left to themselves, would have lived peaceably. When forced to show colours, they very gingerly took up arms for the Crown, and formed themselves into a Loyal Militia. Before long, a force of native Virginians came down from the upper districts, and re-entered Norfolk after a sharp encounter with a small garrison of regulars. The Loyal Militia, who during the action had contrived to post themselves where the fighting was not, sought refuge among the ships of a squadron which lay in the river, with Lord Dunmore, the Governor of the province, on board. That nobleman, and the captain of the largest man of war, laid their heads together over the paper of Instructions which had been issued by the Government at home. They came to the conclusion that Norfolk was "a town in actual rebellion, accessible to the King's ships," and that they had no choice except to carry out the King's order. Accordingly on the afternoon of New Year's Day 1776 the bombardment commenced. The pinewood structures, coated with paint, were soon alight; and favoured by the wind the con-

flagration spread fast. Wherever the Americans were not on the look-out, a boat's crew pushed off and set a match to the sheds where the Scotch factors kept their stores of an article which they intended eventually to be burned, but not by so wholesale and unremunerative a process. Sixty cannon, deliberately trained upon the points where the flames were advancing, defeated every effort to save the town; and the fire raged until four-fifths of the houses were in ashes.

That lamentable occurrence stirred the calm temper of the most famous of Virginians, and animated his precise and severe style; for the Commander-in-Chief of the American army wrote from his headquarters at Cambridge that a few more of such flaming arguments as those which were exhibited at Falmouth and Norfolk would secure a majority in favour of a separation between England and her colonies. Franklin, when Charlestown was shelled and destroyed, had pronounced himself unable to discern how such proceedings could favourably affect those commercial claims on the part of the mother-country which had been the ostensible origin of the war. "Britain," he said, "must certainly be distracted. No tradesman out of Bedlam ever thought of increasing the numbers of his customers by knocking them on the head, or of enabling them to pay their debts by burning their houses." This specimen of Franklin's habitual humour was fraught with as grim a purpose as that which inspired Washington's unwonted rhetoric. The glare thrown upon the future

by these acts of official arson lighted them both to the same conclusion. "It has been with difficulty," Franklin wrote, "that we have carried another humble Petition to the Crown, to give Britain one more chance of recovering the friendship of the colonies: which however she has not sense enough to embrace, and so she has lost them for ever."

CHAPTER XI.

WASHINGTON. THE REFUGEES. THE CONDUCT AND RESULT
OF THE CAMPAIGN.

WASHINGTON, meanwhile, was struggling against difficulties less hopeless indeed than those which beset the British General, but of a character more unusual in modern warfare, and demanding more exceptional qualities in the man whose duty it was to deal with them. The royal garrison was dwindling from disease and privation; but it seemed as if the American army would melt away of itself. Within a week after Bunker's Hill there were many honest militiamen who thought it an eminently suitable occasion to go back to their farms, and get in the hay and possibly the corn before the next battle. One captain appears to have been left with a single file of soldiers. During the last ten days of June the Massachusetts Committee of Safety informed the Selectmen of Bradford that "the whole of a company of fifty men, save two, have scandalously deserted the cause of their country, and stained their own honour by leaving the camp, and returning home." The circumstances under which the troops had originally assembled in camp were such as to render it most un-

likely that they would be induced to remain there through the winter. They had turned out on the morning of Lexington to try their weapons against the British and to run their chance of getting a bullet back; but the idea had never crossed the minds of most of them that they were mortgaging their services for a whole campaign, and still less for an interminable war. They had taken up arms for liberty; and it was a poor beginning, as far as their own share of that blessing was concerned, to find themselves converted from free citizens into the rank and file of a standing army before their leave had been asked, and without a single shilling of bounty. A British recruit entered on the military career with a handsome sum in his pocket, however short a time it might remain in that receptacle. Even a Hessian, when he put on the red-coat, had the satisfaction of reflecting that his beloved Landgrave was the richer by seven guineas a head for himself and each of his comrades. But the American minute-man had nothing but his ration, and a suit of clothes made of wool which his sisters had spun. It was no wonder that an invitation to subscribe the Articles of War, as laid down by the Continental Congress, met with scanty response. Both officers and men preferred to keep within the terms under which they had enlisted in the military establishments of their several Provinces. The regiments of Connecticut and Rhode Island stood engaged up to the first of December, and for not a day longer; and no one portion of the entire force was bound to serve into the

coming year. On the first of January 1776 everybody was free to go; and the lines, which required fifteen thousand men to defend them, would thenceforward be manned by a handful of volunteers who did not care to survive their cause, and were ashamed to abandon their general.

Washington had been born and trained for precisely such a crisis. He had an aversion to arbitrary methods, a keen sense of what was due to others, and a quiet but comprehensive sympathy with their feelings. He knew that his countrymen did not love to be bullied, and were the worst people in the world to entrap or to overreach. It was in vain, he said, to attempt to reason away the prejudices of a whole army.* Instead of trying to force the Articles of War on a reluctant and in some cases a vigorously recalcitrant militia, he resolved to form a regular establishment composed of men who had accepted those Articles by choice, and with their eyes open. A Committee of Congress three in number, of whom Franklin was one, repaired to Cambridge in order to confer with delegates chosen by the New England colonies. They found Washington ready with a scheme for raising twenty-six regiments of soldiers who should engage themselves for a twelve-month certain. He asked for twenty thousand infantry; and the representatives of New England assured him that he might draw thirty thousand from the Northern provinces alone.

* Washington to the President of Congress; Sept. 21, 1775.

It was a striking instance of that too sanguine American temper which the delays and rebuffs of war convert, not into disgust or despair, but into patience and perseverance, and an unalterable determination to win. The enrolment of the new force began in the last week of October. At first the results were most discouraging. No privates would enlist in any corps until they knew the names of the whole regimental hierarchy from the colonel downwards; and when it came to the distribution of commissions, the aspirants were exceedingly difficult to please. Where an officer was too patriotic to be exacting, his colony was jealous for him. At one time Washington expected that half of his captains and lieutenants would leave him. His confidential letters were couched in scathing terms. "Such a dearth of public spirit," he wrote, "and such want of virtue; such stock-jobbing, and fertility in all the low arts to obtain advantages of one kind or another in this great change of military arrangement, I never saw before, and I pray God's mercy that I may never see again." In that atmosphere of intrigue recruiting was sometimes at a standstill, and then for awhile moved slowly on. The call of duty, and the hope of distinction, were there for whatever they were worth in each man's estimation; but, over and above those inducements, the temptations which the Continental Treasury was able to hold forth were pitifully and almost pathetically small. The donative offered to the prætorian guards of American liberty consisted in the

prospect of a month's pay in advance, as soon as there was anything in the military chest, and a promise that at some period in the distant future they would be allowed to buy their uniforms at cost price.* During the first three weeks, out of a group of eleven battalions of militia, less than a thousand men had given in their names. Four thousand at the most joined, in and before November; and, when another month had elapsed, the whole number on the new establishment was still below ten thousand, of whom one in every ten was off home on a furlough which he had claimed as a condition of re-enlistment.

That was the strength of the new army at the end of the year; and by that date the old army had been dissolved. "We have found it," said Washington, "as practicable to stop a torrent as these people, when their time is up." And, even before their time was up, the rank and file of the Connecticut Militia, when they ascertained that a bounty was not forthcoming, planned to march away in a body. That purpose was defeated

* A General Order of October 28, 1775, (quoted by Mr. Fotheringham in his *Siege of Boston*,) recommended to the non-commissioned officers and soldiers at next pay-day to procure themselves under-clothing, and not coats and waistcoats, as it was intended that the new army should be dressed in uniform. "To effect which the Congress will lay in goods upon the best terms they can be bought anywhere for ready money, and will sell them to the soldiers without any profit; by which means a uniform will come cheaper to them than any other clothing that can be bought. A number of tailors will be immediately set to work to make regimentals for those brave men who are willing at all hazards to defend their invaluable rights and privileges."

by the firmness of the General, and the exertions of their own officers; and not least by a spirited and well-timed sermon from the military chaplain of the colony. But no amount of exhortation or supervision could prevent many of the privates belonging to the corps from deserting singly or in small parties. Washington showed a tranquil countenance to the outside world; but beneath the seal of a letter he begged his most intimate correspondent to imagine, since he himself was unwilling to describe, the situation of his mind during that trying interval. It was no light burden, (so he assured his friend,) to maintain a post against the flower of the British troops for six months together, and then to have one army disbanded, and another to be raised, in the presence of the enemy. "Search," he wrote, "the volumes of history through, and I much question whether a case similar to ours is to be found."*

The depletion of his ranks was only one, and not the most painful, of Washington's manifold perplexities. He was engaged on a siege, and the whole camp did not furnish him with a single engineer. With no money in hand he was making an army at a distance of three hundred miles by road from the seat of government and the treasury; and in spite of his eager remonstrances no regular system of communication had as yet been established between Cambridge and Philadelphia. Except plenty to eat, his troops had little or nothing that soldiers wanted. Winter was coming on fast, and they

* Washington to Reed: Cambridge, Jan. 4, 1776.

were not provided with blankets or firewood. The Pennsylvanian mechanics, who were to have turned out muskets at the rate of eight or nine thousand a month, fell very far short of the anticipations which ardent patriots had formed in the hopeful days before muskets had begun to be fired. A sentry in the trenches still shouldered the fowling-piece which he had taken down from above the mantel-shelf on the morning of Lexington. Privates who left for home on furlough, and still more those who went away for good, could not bear to be parted from their guns. The military authorities at Cambridge would gladly have bought in those guns on credit; but they were not in a position to use compulsion against men who still had owing to them the whole of the pay which they had earned. New recruits for the most part came in without arms; and, while the regiments were as yet only half complete, there were not a hundred muskets in store.

The moment seemed close at hand when it would no longer matter whether the soldier carried a gun or a pitchfork. On the third of August account was taken of the stock of ammunition; and the magazine was so bare that Washington wrote off at once to beg for powder from the neighbouring colonies, assuring them that no quantity, however small, would be beneath notice. Three weeks afterwards he detected a mistake in the return, and pronounced the situation nothing short of terrible. He had reckoned, he said, upon three hundred quarter casks, and had but thirty-two barrels.

The rains had been heavy and continuous, and the cartridges which had already been served out were spoiling in the pouches. From that time forwards, under whatever provocation, the American batteries were silent; and the powder was reserved for firing musket balls at pistol distance in an emergency which nothing could postpone if once the plight of the besiegers became known to the British General.* Under these circumstances clever men, who had seen something of warfare, began to discuss the advisability of having recourse to very primitive instruments of destruction. General Charles Lee wrote to Franklin in favour of enlisting pikemen, and received a reply urging him not to despise even bows and arrows. Franklin's arguments in favour of that form of artillery are excellent reading, and on paper unanswerable; but Washington was proof against them. Bows and arrows were used with effect by some Indian warriors in the camp of the besiegers, who had been trained into Christians and agriculturists at Dartmouth College without having forgotten how to lay an ambush; but it is not on record that any pale-face went into battle armed with a weapon more antiquated than his grandfather's firelock. Pikes, indeed, which had not gone altogether out of fashion among European military theorists, were manufactured by hundreds with a view to tide the American cause over that period of destitution in all the articles that

* Washington to the President of Congress, 11. November, 1775; and the retrospective letter of March 31, 1776.

made up the equipment of a soldier.* It was a cruel time for George Washington. "The reflection," he wrote, "on my situation, and that of this army, produces many an unhappy hour when all around me are wrapt in sleep. I have often thought how much happier I should have been if I had taken a musket on my shoulder, and entered the ranks; or, (if I could have justified the measure to posterity and my own conscience, had retired to the back-country, and lived in a wigwam."

In this mood, and in such straits, he was tasting the full bitterness of the treatment which every great commander, other than an absolute sovereign, is in his first campaign called upon to endure. Patriots, all the continent over, were wondering and questioning why Boston had not long ago been stormed; and the mouth of the one man who could tell them the reason was closed in public by considerations of which, in his familiar correspondence, he made no secret. "I cannot

* "The people employed to make spears are desired by the general to make them thirteen feet in length, and the wood part a good deal more substantial than those already made. Those in the New Hampshire lines are ridiculously short and light."—*American Archives*, July 23, 1775. In an early General Order Washington desired that pikes should be kept clean and greased.

Major-General Lloyd served several campaigns against Frederic the Great, and (a matter more arduous still) succeeded in pleasing Mr. Carlyle, who pronounced him a writer of great natural sagacity. Lloyd, in that section of his *History of the Seven Years' War* which treats of the Ordering of a Modern Army, recommended that one infantry soldier out of every four should have a pike in place of a musket.

stand justified to the world," so Washington wrote, "without exposing my own weakness, and injuring the cause by declaring my wants, which I am determined not to do, farther than unavoidable necessity brings every man acquainted with them. If I did not consult the public good more than my own tranquillity, I should long ere this have put everything on the cast of a die." The chimney-corner heroes, as he styled them, urged him to begin by recapturing Charlestown. But long before Christmas Bunker's Hill was an Ehrenbreitstein or a Gibraltar by comparison with what it had been in the month of June. According to Washington's own description it was, both in rear and in front, "by odds the strongest fortress" of the British; which one thousand men, made of the stuff that was behind those ramparts, could keep against any twenty thousand. And in the American camp there were not half that number, all told, under arms;—if such an expression could be fairly applied to troops who had nothing with which to load their cannon, and whom the first half-hour's fight would leave without a cartridge for their muskets.

Criticism was severe upon Washington in Congress, in the newspapers, and above all in the taverns; but he already had secured the confidence and the loyalty of those who immediately surrounded his person. On the eighteenth of October he summoned his major-generals and brigadiers to a conference. The delegates from Philadelphia, who answered pretty closely to the celebrated Representatives on Mission to the Armies

during the early wars of the French Revolution, had invited Washington to say why an assault should not forthwith be ordered. His own decision had been made; and he was well able to express it and to stand by it. And yet, for the satisfaction of his employers, he was not sorry to fortify that decision by the concurrence (if such could be obtained) of his ardent and, in some cases, very capable subordinates. Charles Lee would not commit himself to the support of one whom he had the presumption to regard as an overrated rival, and spoke in guarded phrases, like a man not sufficiently behind the scenes to judge. But Ward, Greene, and Putnam, and their other colleagues, one and all, roundly declared that an attack on Boston by open force, until things changed greatly for the better, could not even be contemplated as a practicable operation. Washington, in addition to everything else, had his special troubles with the provincial assemblies; whose good-will, in an army composed like his, imported at least as much to him as that of the central government. Massachusetts and Connecticut had desired him to send them back strong detachments from their own militia regiments in order to protect the towns on their coasts from the armed vessels of the enemy. To this requisition the Commander-in-Chief replied that the threatened districts would have to take measures for defending themselves, and that, if it came to the worst, they must patiently endure calamities against which he could not effectually guard them without sacrificing the

general interests of the cause.* He quietly but explicitly gave it to be understood that not a man could be spared from that neighbourhood where the great game was being played out which would fix the fate, not of Boston only, but of every fishing-hamlet along the sea-board of all the colonies.

His constancy was rewarded. At last he began to reap the advantage which accrues to a strategist who, amidst perils and anxieties the full extent of which is known only to himself, steadfastly maintains at least the appearance of an aggressive attitude. New England felt proud of having an army which could keep the field. The spirit of her people was high and buoyant, and they were ready to perform their duty, when that duty was told them by a man whom they believed. To fill the gaps in his line, while recruitment for the Continental army was in progress, Washington invited Massachusetts and New Hampshire to call out five thousand minute-men on temporary service. They came in great numbers, and their behaviour in camp left nothing to be desired. It soon was evident that the action of the Connecticut militia was not to the taste of their fellow-citizens. The men, as they straggled home in twos and threes, met with a reception which convinced them that, unless they returned straight away to their regiment before the public opinion of their vil-

* Washington to the Speaker of the General Assembly of *Massachusetts Bay*; 31 July, 1775.

lage took shape in action, they would have to travel at least the first stage of their journey to Cambridge by a mode of conveyance neither easy nor dignified, and in a costume not unsuited to people who had chosen to display the white feather. The next time that the battalion was paraded, and the roll called, only eighty of the delinquents were missing. But the gallant colony, after having played so vigorous a part in the scenes of political disturbance which ushered in the war, was not now contented with seeing that a parcel of unwilling soldiers were sent back to their quarters. A touch of shame and compunction at the thought of the vexation inflicted by her unworthy sons on their uncomplaining General gave such an impulse to the patriotism of Connecticut that the force which she contributed to Washington's army, from that moment onwards, and throughout the whole course of the struggle, exceeded the contingent furnished by any province, except Massachusetts only.* The alacrity of the New Hampshire minute-men, and the splendid repentance of Connecticut, afforded examples which were not wasted. The tide had turned, and ran in fast. Companies filled up with recruits. Older soldiers came promptly from furlough. By the middle of February 1776 Washington reckoned his strength at the full number of seventeen

* In 1776 Massachusetts sent 13,372 men to the army, Connecticut 6,390, Virginia 6,181, and Pennsylvania 5,519. During the remaining years of the war Massachusetts sent 38,091, Connecticut 21,142, Virginia 20,491, and Pennsylvania 16,689.

thousand fighting men; and the best intelligence which he could obtain from inside Boston led him to conjecture that the losses and privations of the siege had reduced the British to a little over five thousand effective infantry.

The informants on whom the General relied had put the hostile force at too low a figure; but for them, and for him as well, it was the hour of hope. He had worked and waited long with less than no encouragement; and now everything seemed to be on the mend at once. The first gleam of success had been the capture of the *Nancy*, a royal ordnance-brig which Captain Manly brought in to shore at Cape Ann, the northern point of Massachusetts Bay. Washington, who knew the value of the prize better than did the British admiral, hurried off a strong party of minute-men to protect the unlading of her cargo. It was well worth the trouble; for among the items were two thousand muskets, a hundred thousand flints, thirty thousand round-shot, and thirty tons of bullets. When the trophies arrived in camp the most popular if not the most useful was a monster mortar, which Putnam, amidst universal hilarity, baptised with a bottle of rum; but which enjoyed a very short life under its new name of the "Congress."* There was no fear that the old General would be accused of wasting good liquor, for immense and increasing abundance reigned throughout the cantonments.

* "Our people splat the Congress the third time that they fired it." *How's Diary*; March 4, 1776.

The only difference in the ration, as months went on, was that the men got another half-pound of meat daily, and that their allowance of vegetables was doubled. Means had been discovered to remedy the scarcity of fuel; and the soldiers secured enough of the illimitable forests that clothed the land to cook their generous meals, and to keep them warm in weather which, even under less comfortable circumstances, would have had no great terrors for a New Englander. For the winter, which had promised badly, became first endurable and then unusually mild. "The Bay is open," a colonial officer wrote in January. "Everything thaws here, except old Put. He is still as hard as ever, crying out for powder, powder, ye Gods give us powder!" And at last the powder came. Washington, who would stoop and traffic for nothing else, had begged, bought, or borrowed a modest but well-husbanded stock of that precious commodity. And, in the same letter which recommended the use of bows and arrows, Franklin reported the welcome intelligence that the Secret Committee of Congress, appointed to provide the material of war,—a Committee of which he himself was the life and soul,—had contrived to lay its hands on a hundred and fifty tons of saltpetre.

Whether the supply of powder in the Cambridge magazine was small or large, the news from England was of a nature to make it go off of itself. On the first of January 1776 a flag of thirteen stripes, one for each colony, was hoisted for the first time over the American

headquarters; and on the same day copies of the speech made by the King at the opening of Parliament were distributed broadcast among the besiegers by the exertions of the Boston Tories. Those gentlemen anticipated that the august document would strike panic, and implant penitence, in the hardest breast; but the blockade had already endured long enough for them to have lost touch with the mass of their countrymen. They were woefully out in their calculations. "We are favoured," wrote Washington, "with a sight of His Majesty's most gracious speech, breathing sentiments of tenderness and compassion for his deluded American subjects. We now know the ultimatum of British justice." The tone of that manifesto was haughty and confident; the threats were formidable; and the Ministry was labouring with zeal, and spending with prodigality, in order to make the royal menaces good.

Ordinary men, whether in their own corner of a battle, or from their particular post in the wider operations of a war, discern that which is immediately to the front of them, and do not trouble themselves about what is in the distance or the future. The Americans who, from Prospect Hill and Roxbury Fort, saw Howe and his regiments cooped up within an acreage which would not support the dignity of a small British squire, laughed at King George's assurances that a speedy retribution was to fall "on the author and promoters of a desperate conspiracy." Horace Walpole descanted to his friend Mason on the absurdity of the idea that the Congress

at Philadelphia would be so frightened at the British army being besieged in Boston that it would sue for peace. The thought which struck a man of letters, writing in his study at Twickenham, was still more forcibly brought home to a Continental soldier, already something of a veteran, as he stood behind the parapet of an impregnable redoubt, and fingered the lock of a new Tower musket which was his share in the spoils of the store-ship *Nancy*. The conclusion at which Walpole arrived by intuition, Franklin reached by a process of reckoning. "Britain," he said, "at the expense of three millions has killed one hundred and fifty Yankees this campaign, which is twenty thousand pounds a head; and at Bunker's Hill she gained a mile of ground, half of which she lost again by our taking post on Ploughed Hill. During the same time sixty thousand children have been born in America." From these data, (the Doctor argued,) a mathematical head might easily compute the time and expense necessary to kill all American rebels, and to conquer their whole territory.

Congress had already voted a Resolution which reads like a decree of the Roman Senate in the sternest days of the Republic. It was to the effect that, if General Washington and his council should be of opinion that he could make a successful attack on the troops in Boston, the attack should be made, notwithstanding that the town and the property in it might thereby be destroyed. The President of the assembly, who had large possessions in the devoted city, communicated the Re-

solution to the General, and added on his own part a prayer that God would crown the undertaking with victory. Half way through February, when a spell of hard weather came, and the channels between the town and the mainland were choked with ice, Washington was ready, and even persuaded himself that he was eager, to assault the British lines. But his military advisers were almost unanimous in the opposite sense. They warned the Commander-in-Chief that he greatly underestimated the strength of the garrison; and a very recent event had indicated what would be the chances of an advance in broad daylight across an ice-field swept by grape against works held by British infantry, and plenty of it. An American storming-party had attempted Quebec in the darkest hour of the last night of the old year. The enterprise was a complete and costly failure, though it had been heroically led by Richard Montgomery who was killed, and by Benedict Arnold who was badly wounded but, for his misfortune, was borne away alive. The slaughter and discomfiture, which marked the operation against Quebec, would in all human probability be repeated at Boston on a far larger scale, and with most damaging consequences to the cause of the Revolution. Congress might be willing to sacrifice Boston; but the generals of the only army which Congress had would not expend their people without reasonable hope of an adequate return. As men of tried and admitted courage, they had no qualms about speaking out on the side of caution; and their sturdy frank-

ness did Washington a service which he himself before long came very near to acknowledging. When he had slept twice on their counsel, with such sleep as during that winter visited his pillow, he allowed that the intolerable irksomeness of his personal situation might possibly have inclined him to put more to the hazard than prudence would have sanctioned.*

He had refused to move forward at the dictation of public clamour, and he had been restrained by those around him from obeying the momentary promptings of his own impatience. At length he took action, at the due time, and in the right way. General Howe had arrived at the conclusion that Boston was useless as a base of operations against the continent of America, and most assuredly could not be regarded in the light of desirable quarters for the ensuing summer. Fully intending sooner or later to evacuate the city, he had preferred to wait for additional transports, a fresh supply of provisions, and a season more suited to a voyage which at the best would be uncomfortable and distressing, and terribly dangerous in a gale. It was no light matter to conduct along four hundred miles of hostile coast, in the northern seas, a fleet into which would be crowded a whole army, the staff of a civil government, and all the loyalists of a great province, together with their families and furniture. The patriots inside Boston, always quick to detect any symptoms favourable to their cause, apprised the American commander that the

* Washington to the President of Congress; 18 Feb., 1776.

British garrison would not be long with them; and his telescope confirmed the story. Heavy cannon were seen to be withdrawn from the fortifications, and carried on board the ships. The square-rigged vessels in the harbour had been taken into the royal service; their sails were bent, and their water-casks sent ashore to be filled. All this show, Washington opined, might only be a feint;* and he resolved to make sure that it should become a reality. He devised a scheme which would oblige the British either to surrender the capital of Massachusetts, or come forth and attack him on his own ground with no probability of success, and all but the certainty of a frightful disaster. But at one end of the city or the other, in fair weather or in foul, with or without bloodshed, from Boston he was determined that they should go.

Howe reposed in the belief that he might choose his own moment for the step which he had in contemplation. An attempt from the rebels, (he informed Lord Dartmouth,) whether by surprise or otherwise, was not in the least to be apprehended. Nothing, he said, was so much to be wished as that they would have the rashness to quit those strong intrenchments to which alone they owed their safety. Howe was so far in the right that for either Washington or himself to assault was to court defeat; inasmuch as the English and the American positions were equally strong and manned by troops who, when fighting under cover, were equally

* Washington to Major-General Lee: Cambridge, Feb. 26, 1776.

good. But where two armies are so situated that the defence is more formidable than the attack, special attention must be paid to any commanding post which one or another of the parties can seize and fortify without a contest. Just such a post was the promontory of Dorchester, which covered and dominated Boston on the South. Two miles long, and two-thirds of a mile broad, it was dotted with heights of sufficient elevation for military purposes, planted exactly where they were most useful to the besiegers. A battery placed on the Eastern extremity would carry its shot across the deep-water approach to the harbour; and a battery on the Western horn could annihilate the town.

Howe had neglected to secure the peninsula, and he was not without his excuse. The ground, open on the quarter towards the enemy, required a larger force to hold it than he could spare from his widely extended and ever-threatened lines. He had no hope of being reinforced from across the ocean. Lord Barrington, in January 1776, laid a paper before the King stating that the strength of the army at home fell short of fourteen thousand, counting in the officers, who in the higher grades were in prodigious excess with reference to the men. "North Britain," he wrote, "never was so bare; having only one battalion of foot, and one regiment of dragoons, besides invalids." Such scanty detachments as were sent sailed months behind time, in bad ships, for the worst of reasons. Frederic the Great did not

profess an intimate acquaintance with naval matters; and indeed his solitary experience of navigation had been an inland voyage in a Dutch canal-boat. But he understood as well as any man in Christendom that reinforcements should be brought onto the field before the event instead of after it. He learned with astonishment from his envoy in London that, at a crisis when every day was of consequence, men-of-war were not employed for the conveyance of troops because people high in place would not surrender their commission of three per cent. on the hire of trading vessels.*

Bad as it was, that was not the worst of the story. In the course of January Clinton, under express orders from home, started for the Carolinas with two thousand men, who were withdrawn from the already inadequate garrison of Boston. Lord Barrington was opposed to the expedition; but his dislike of the project had been overborne by other Ministers who, because inside the Cabinet they were ruder fighters than the Secretary at War, thought themselves sounder judges of a military operation. The unhappy nobleman who was supposed to wield the sword of England surrendered his view the more easily because the raid on the Southern colonies of America soon became a pet scheme of his royal master. The King himself, with his customary minuteness and precision, named the regiments which were to

* Le Roi Frédéric au Comte de Maltzan, Potsdam, 8 Avril 1776. Le Comte de Maltzan au Roi Frédéric, Londres, 23 Avril, 1776.

sail from the Home ports; and his zeal was so great that, while the army in Ireland had been reduced too low for safety, and Scotland had been stripped almost bare, only three battalions of regular infantry remained available for the protection of the whole of England. Clinton was joined off Charleston by Lord Cornwallis, who brought at least two thousand more soldiers, and by Sir Peter Parker with some fifty-gun ships and frigates. But the force which, if it had been left with Howe, might have enabled him to hold his own in New England, was all too weak for independent action. The outworks protecting the approach to Charleston were feebly attacked, and stoutly defended; and the affair resulted in a failure for Clinton, and in nothing short of a calamity for Parker and his squadron.

Washington, on the other hand, had men enough not only for the indispensable requirements but also for the profitable risks of war. There had been a deficiency of heavy guns; but at last that want was supplied. Immediately after Lexington a handful of American volunteers,—with Benedict Arnold, and better men than him, among them, though braver there could not be,—captured Ticonderoga by a stroke of well-timed and audacious inspiration. The fortress contained a great store of cannon, which had formerly been transported into those distant wilds by Anglo-Saxon energy. The stock of that latter article had not run out. Colonel Knox, a deft and enterprising officer high in Washing-

ton's confidence, built sledges, and in the dead of winter hauled the priceless freight Southward along frozen lakes, and over forest roads which were barely passable during the droughts of summer. When the first and worst stage of the journey had been overcome, and nothing more serious than fifty leagues of snowdrift and mire lay between himself and the goal towards which he was travelling, the Colonel gaily wrote that he hoped to present his Excellency with a whole train of artillery. Before March he handed over to his chief forty large guns, and half as many mortars; and Washington in the meanwhile, by his own exertions, had scraped together the wherewithal at least to open fire. He had ammunition enough to go once round the army; but, when the cartridge boxes of the infantry were replenished, and the magazines in the batteries had been filled up, only a hundred barrels of powder remained in reserve. Other military stores had been provided in plenty; rude of design, although suited for rough and temporary work in the hands of dexterous and hardy men. As material for breastworks there were vast piles of faggots, and of grass ropes such as a pair of New England haymakers could twist at the rate of a fathom a minute. There were empty casks, to hold the earth from the ditches; stacks of shovels and pickaxes; and two thousand bandages for broken limbs which by the grace of Heaven, or the good sense of man, never came to be needed. Out of sight from the British lines, if not from the British spies, there lay in Charles River two floating batteries,

and barges with room to carry ten battalions across a stretch of smooth water. They had been constructed hastily and slightly, but by people the occupation of whose lives had taught them to know whether or not a boat would swim. And, at the last moment, the militia of all the neighbouring townships repaired to camp, with a pledge from Washington that he would not keep them long, and a belief on their part that this time the General purposed to see the business through.

They were correct in their anticipations. On those rare occasions when Washington had the means to assume the offensive, his action was as swift, as direct, as continuous, and (for its special characteristic) as unexpected as that of any captain in history. He had not fought Red Indians in his youth for nothing. But, secret and silent as he was in regard to the direction and the details of his future movements, Washington was too much of a citizen not to place himself in close mental relation with his soldiers before he called upon them for unusual efforts and sacrifices. On the eve of the final struggle he issued an appeal to the army. Except in its perfect suitability to the tastes and aspirations of those whom he addressed, it was a composition very unlike those bulletins by which under the Directory and the First Empire the French were incited to the conquest and plunder of Europe. His General Order of February the twenty-sixth began by forbidding officers, non-commissioned officers, or privates to play at cards or other games of chance; inasmuch as, at a time of

distress, men might find enough to do in the service of God and their country without abandoning themselves to vice and immorality. As the season was now fast approaching (so the proclamation went on) when every man might expect to be drawn into the field of action, it was highly important that he should prepare his mind for what lay before him. They were engaged in a noble cause. Freedom or slavery would be the result of their conduct. Every temporal advantage to them and their posterity would depend upon the vigour of their exertions.

These words were still being quoted and commented on throughout the camp when they were drowned by the roar of cannon, but not forgotten. On the second of March, and again on the fourth, the American batteries commenced to play. The noise was tremendous, but the slaughter small. A distant bombardment, with the ordnance of the eighteenth century, produced few of the horrors of war except only to the tax-payer. Up to Christmas 1775 the British garrison had discharged two thousand rounds, and had killed less than twenty of the enemy. And the moral effect, as it is called, was so much the reverse of what was intended that the commanding officer of artillery advised General Howe to discontinue the cannonade, as the only perceptible result was to inure the colonists to danger. In March, however, when Washington's cannon began to speak, the British gunners could not refuse the challenge. They replied lustily; but they shot next to no one, and

dismounted nothing, although the besiegers contrived to burst five of their own mortars.*

The Americans hit a regimental guard-house, which they could not very well miss, and not many human beings. Nevertheless on their side it was no waste of powder. On Monday the fourth of March the besiegers maintained a heavy fire far into the night. The soldiers in Boston were kept busy extinguishing flames and removing goods from beneath falling roofs; and they had neither eyes nor ears for what was passing to the Southward of them. Soon after dark General Thomas led a strong brigade over Dorchester Neck, followed by three hundred carts laden with fascines and coils of twisted hay. With these materials a parapet was rapidly built along the causeway, under cover of which fresh loads of stuff travelled to and fro throughout the night. Meanwhile on each of the twin heights in the centre of the peninsula, which were the keys of the position, the colonial soldiers were digging, and ramming, and plas-

* *General Heath's Diary*, December 18, 1775. In the course of that morning the Americans broke ground on Lechmere Point, the most exposed spot in their lines. Their working party numbered three hundred. An expectation prevailed that it would be "a bloody day;" and Washington personally superintended the conduct of the operation. The British batteries, until the afternoon, thundered away both with shot and shell; and the American surgeon who was at hand throughout never once drew his instruments from their case, or a roll of lint from his dressing-box. A plain man, who has fired a charge of slugs at an object in the water a hundred yards off, may estimate the value of a remote cannonade from old-fashioned twenty-four-pounders, even if he has never looked into a treatise on the law of projectiles.

tering the earth, like so many peasants of Holland strengthening an embankment to save their village from an inundation. At dawn of day two forts were already in existence, and in a condition to protect their inmates from grape-shot and musket-balls. A British officer of a sentimental turn compared the result of the night's labour with the wonders wrought by the lamp of Aladdin. In less flowery but fatally unpractical words General Howe told Lord Dartmouth that at least twelve thousand men must have been employed on the fortification. The rebels, he remarked, had done more between evening and morning than the whole of his own army would have accomplished in an entire month. He had made an error of a thousand per cent.; for the American working party did not exceed twelve hundred pairs of arms. It would have been well for Howe if his professional education had included a course of land-surveying in company with Washington, or even of building fences with Putnam. The royal forces were embarked on a war of such a character, and in such a country, that the hatchet and the spade ranked high among military weapons. A general who knew something about homely industries, and their application to strategical purposes, would have been of great service to an army where guidance and teaching in that department were peculiarly needed. The behaviour of the British soldier in the labours of the trench and the field-work was his weakest point then, and forty years afterwards; as was sorrowfully admitted by the

best judges, who in other respects were his warm admirers.*

Howe was unskilled in appraising the amount which any given number of sappers or artificers could get done in a given number of hours; but he had seen too many battles and sieges for him to have any doubt as to the plight in which the latest move of his adversaries had landed him. He was not the player to accept checkmate when it was first offered. Between two and three thousand of his infantry were at once shipped on transports to Castle Island, with the design that they should thence attack the promontory of Dorchester. For their commander Howe had only to choose among the men of headlong courage at his disposal, and he chose Lord Percy, who had no objection, on his own account, to face whatever might await him across the southern arm of the harbour. The forces under Thomas had been doubled by a reinforcement of two thousand men. The works, formidable at daybreak, before noon had received a finishing touch. Orchards had been cut down to form an abattis. Rows of barrels filled

* On this subject Sir John Burgoyne, in his account of the siege of Burgos, has made some observations which are most interesting, but (even after this lapse of time) not altogether agreeable reading. "I had," he says in the course of his remarks, "an opportunity of pointing out to Lord Wellington, one day, a French and an English working party, each excavating a trench. While the French shovels were going on as merrily as possible, we saw in an equal space, at long intervals, a single English shovelful make its appearance." *Life and Correspondence of Field Marshal Sir John Burgoyne*, pages 232 and 233 of the Edition of 1873.

with earth were placed along the edge of the hill, which was bare and steep, with the design of rolling them down upon the ascending columns. The Americans everywhere seemed cheery and resolute, and those ensconced behind the earthworks on Dorchester heights were even exhilarated. They looked forward to another battle of Bunker's Hill in a position twice as strong, with a force more than twice as large, and under the immediate eye of the General-in-Chief; for Washington was on the spot full of fight and, for him, full of talk, and as hopeful of victory as the youngest of his followers.

Hopeful, that is, in the quarter where he commanded in person; for he was far from easy about the fate of the operation to which his left wing stood committed. Putnam had four thousand selected troops on the parade-ground at Cambridge, ready at a signal from Dorchester heights to enter the flotilla which lay in the river, and advance by water against the western face of Boston under cover of the new floating batteries. Washington disapproved the project; but his judgment had been over-ridden, and it only remained for him loyally to make the best of a plan the wisdom of which he gravely and sadly doubted. At this period of the war the command-in-chief of the American army was rather a limited monarchy than the benevolent despotism into which it was gradually converted by the pressure of his strong character, and the lustre of his first great success. Congress began by being keenly in-

quisitive into the movements of the army, and was much too anxious about the event to refrain from advising and even from meddling. The delegates at Philadelphia were sufficiently afraid of Washington to abstain from giving him a direct order. They transmitted their views to the headquarters at Cambridge in the shape of proposals which they requested him to have debated and decided in a council of war. Such a council had recently been convoked, in which Washington was outvoted; and so it came about that the Americans were to deliver and to sustain an attack on one and the same day. That day was the anniversary of what was called the Boston Massacre, and this time there would have been a massacre indeed. It was odds, and large odds, that neither of the two assaults could succeed; and the assailants in both cases were of such tough fibre, and their leaders so fiery and determined, that failure would not have taken place until after a prolonged slaughter. If the fighting had once begun, the history of the Revolutionary war would have been disfigured by a more deeply crimsoned page than any which can now be found in the volume.

But it was not so to be. The wind blew a gale. Sashes were forced in, sheds were wrecked and overthrown, and vessels torn from their moorings and driven against the quays. Percy's transports could not cross the water in such a hurricane; and, until the British took the initiative, Washington refused to give the signal for Putnam's forward movement. He was blamed for

want of firmness; but the old officer whom he had superseded in the command of the army generously and indignantly defended one who never was at the pains to defend himself. The prudence of Washington, so General Heath declared, was applauded by military men of several nations after they had made an inspection of the land and water which was to have been the scene of action. And the veteran was mindful to direct his gratitude higher still, and to aver that Providence, kind not for the first time, must have interposed to save his countrymen when they were bent on self-destruction.*

The storm raged through the afternoon and night of the fifth of March; and next day the wind was still boisterous, and the rain came down in torrents. Before the weather grew calm and dry it had been brought home to the British General that the Americans could not be expelled from their redoubts and that, so long as they stayed in the redoubts, they were masters of the whole promontory. Immediately to their front, and at their disposal when they thought fit to occupy it, was a mound known as Nook's Hill, from which at the distance of half a mile they could enfilade the British earthworks on Boston Neck, and would not be much further from Griffin's Wharf where the immortal tea was spilt. Admiral Shulldham, who had succeeded Graves in command of the fleet, warned the military authorities that, if Washington retained his hold on the Dorchester

* *Heath's Memoirs*; Feb. 15th and March 5th, 1776.

heights, he himself could not keep a ship in the harbour. When the prospect of a battle had vanished, the disappointment of the British soon took the form of despondency. Right or wrong, the belief was general that for the space of several months no despatches had been received from the Government in London. It looked, (such was the burden of the private letters written by the garrison during that anxious fortnight,) as if the men in the post of danger, now that it was fast becoming an abode of despair, had been left to get out of a bad scrape as best they could. "The fleet and the army," it was said, "complain of each other, and both of the people at home." With that suspicion in their minds the superior officers repaired to a council which Howe convened, and learned from him, without surprise or dissatisfaction, that he was fully determined at whatever cost to save the army.

The danger was pressing. After dark on the ninth of March the New Englanders were already busy on Nook's Hill. They laboured undiscovered and unmolested till some stupid fellows kindled a fire in rear of the knoll, and soon found the place even warmer than they wished or intended. Four of them were killed by one cannon ball, and the detachment was withdrawn to await a more convenient opportunity. But the incident gave Howe food for reflection. The Americans, it was evident, might choose their own moment for erecting batteries at a range within which round shot could be aimed with effect at a knot of

men, and much more against ships and houses, the tilt of a powder-waggon, or the flank of a line of cannon planted along the curtain of a fortification. Next day he began to push forward his arrangements for the evacuation of the town; and, wherever Howe exerted himself, he worked fast. But he was not quick enough to please Washington, who gave him a significant hint that the patience of the besiegers was near to exhaustion. The colonists returned to Nook's Hill, and crowned the eminence with a redoubt, from which this time they refused to be driven. That was the notice to quit. It was handed in on the sixteenth of March; and on the seventeenth General Howe embarked his army, and Washington was a figure in history. It was exactly the operation which, repeated half a generation afterwards in the port of Toulon, laid the foundation of a fame less desirable, and a life's work far less durable than his.*

* For the two previous paragraphs see *Heath's Memoirs*, March 9, 1776. Washington to the President of Congress, March 7, 9, 13, and 16. Fotheringham's *Siege of Boston*, chapter XII.

David How's Diary shows how a great event struck a humble contemporary, who had played a man's part in helping to bring it about.

"March 3. Last night there was Firing Amost all night on both sides. Two of our mortars splet in pices at Litchmor's point.

"March 4. Last night there was A fiering all night with kannan and Morters on both sides. Three Regments went from Cambridge to Roxbury and carried Some Field Pieces with them. The Milisher from Several towns are called In to stay 3 days.

"March 5. Our people went to Dodgster hill Last Night

Unfortunately there was more than a tactical and topographical resemblance between the recapture of Toulon and the capture of Boston. Those two great events are marked by the same melancholy and even tragic circumstance. In both cases the retirement of a fleet and an army was accompanied by a wholesale and enforced emigration of non-combatants. The announcement that the city was to be surrendered fell as a thunderbolt on the loyalists whose home it was, and not less on those who had repaired thither as a place of temporary refuge. The last trump, (so Washington wrote,) could not have struck them with greater consternation. A fixed and ardent faith in the overwhelming and omnipresent power of Britain was the first article in the creed of the American Tories;—for that term was universally applied to them by themselves and their fellow-colonists, although among those politicians at Westminster whom they had trusted and followed to their ruin many still laid claim to the name of Whigs. When Howe departed from Boston there were eleven hundred people who dared not stay behind, or one for

and built a fort there. They have ben firing at Dogester amost All Day.

"March 10. Last night our people went to Dodesther neck And there was a hot fire from Boston which Killed 4 men with one ball. I went to meting all Day; Mr. Lennard preached.

"March 12. Last night there was brisk fireing all Night From boston. William Parker made me a pair of Half Boots for Two Shilling and 8d."

every ten of his soldiers and sailors. They formed the aristocracy of the province by virtue of their official rank; of their dignified callings and professions; of their hereditary wealth; and of their culture, except so far as it partook of that self-education which was open to all.

Eighteen were clergymen, for the most part Episcopalians, as true to what they believed to be their political obligations as any English Nonjuror who went out from his parsonage or his palace in the summer of 1689. Among the exiles many were landowners and substantial men of business, and a greater number still were public servants. Good places, whether lay or legal, were reserved for people who regarded themselves as belonging to good families. The same names, and those not many, occur over and over again as Judges of the Superior Court; Receivers-General and Cashiers of his Majesty's Customs; Commissioners, Inspectors, Treasurers, and Registrars and Clerks of Probate. Hutchinsons and Olivers, Leonards, Chandlers, and Coffins—patronymics which to a Bostonian of those days denoted the very quintessence of exclusiveness—divided among themselves salaries and honours, perquisites and privileges. They honestly believed that the fitness of things required the established method of distribution to last for ever. Their best feelings were hurt when a new man, with new-fangled political opinions, put in his claim to a share. The inspiring motive, according to their story, of every Revolutionary leader was the need and greed for office;

and their posterity across the Canadian frontier continued, in filial good faith, to repeat the same tale for the benefit of our own generation.

In their view Congressmen and Committee-men were "a set of rascals, who only sought to feather their own nests, and not to serve their country." An unlucky loyalist who happened to use those expressions in ill-chosen company got himself inside a jail; and the words have a natural and almost elemental ring about them which irresistibly suggests that it was not the first time, by a hundred, that they had been uttered with emphasis in Tory circles. According to the theory accepted by those circles, Otis started the agitation which started everything because his father had missed a judgeship. Joseph Warren was a broken man, and sought to mend his fortunes by upsetting those of others. John Hancock, too rich to want a place, suffered from wounded vanity when walking behind his betters in the order of precedence. Richard Henry Lee had been baulked of an appointment as distributor of stamps under the Act which then, and only then, he came forward to denounce. John Adams turned rebel because he was refused a Commission of the Peace; and Washington himself never forgave the British War-Office for having treated him with the neglect which was the natural portion of Provincial military officers. It was an argument with two edges; and there is now little doubt which of the two cut the sharpest. What claim to

perpetuity, (it has been finely asked,*) had those institutions under which John Adams could not be a magistrate, and any stripling who had purchased a pair of colours took rank of George Washington? Disappointed men perhaps they were. But their day arrived; and, if they could not be justices or majors in a marching regiment, they both obtained a post for which they were not less competent, and became each in his turn the chief governor of a nation.

The loyalists were a prosperous and enjoying set, free with their cash; hearty with their fellows; just, and something more, towards those who had a claim on them; and very indulgent to their negro slaves. They were not ascetics; and, if they had stayed in the country, it is possible that the march of Temperance legislation would have been seriously delayed in some of the New England districts. The breaking of his punch-bowl was the worst damage to his property which Doctor Peters of Hebron had to deplore, when his angry parishioners came to search his house for arms. An epitaph composed for himself by an Episcopalian clergyman, commencing with the lines,

Here lies a priest of English blood
Who living liked what e'er was good,

would not have been misplaced on the tombstones of many among his reverend brethren. Clerics, men of business, and country gentlemen, they dressed ceremoni-

* Sabine's *Historical Essay*: page 57 in the Boston edition of 1864.

ously and expensively; and they had manners, and those not merely skin-deep, in harmony with their external appearance. Doctor Walter of Boston "was a remarkably handsome man, tall and well-proportioned. When in the street he wore a long blue cloth cloak over his cassock and gown; a full-bottomed wig, black silk hose, and square quartered shoes with silver buckles. Happy himself, he communicated happiness to all around him. In the desk he read the glorious service like one inspired. His heart, his house, his purse was ever open to the needy." The Governor of Rhode Island, who was a native of the colony and a resident at the pleasant town of Newport, in the matter of a wig was satisfied with nothing less than one made in England of the pattern and size worn by the Speaker in the House of Commons. Green and gold, or purple and gold, formed the daily costume of a wealthy Tory merchant.* It was not all outside show. The more notable members of the British party were given to polite learning, and spared neither care nor money over the education of their sons. In that numerous contingent of emigrants which left the province when Boston fell, one out of every five was a Harvard man. The colonies, if we may trust a comparison which occurred to a lady who knew them before the war, suffered as much and in the same way by the expulsion of the loyalists as France, under Louis the Fourteenth and ever after, suffered by

* The Articles on the Rev. William Walter, Joseph Wanton, and Nathan Rogers in Sabine's *Loyalists*.

the expatriation of the Huguenots. The remark went too far, and not exactly in the right direction; but it cannot be questioned that the Revolution made America the poorer by some elements which during the next half-century that country could ill afford to lose.*

The loyalists were fully persuaded that they were more estimable than the majority of their fellow-subjects; and they attributed their superiority, whether real or fancied, to themselves and not to their circumstances. They spoke and wrote of their opponents in a tone of class arrogance which, when once the rift came, made reconciliation impossible. In the rhymed satires and political catechisms which issued from the Tory press the most respected members of the popular party were held up to scorn as the refuse of mankind. The delegates to the Congress were described as pettifogging attorneys, disbarred advocates, outlawed smugglers, bankrupt shopkeepers; and, at the best, as innkeepers and horse-dealers who had not as yet gone through the Court. The world was told how a bricklayer or carpenter would lie down at night, and awake in the morning a Lycurgus or a Solon. As each demagogue in turn, by rope or otherwise, went to his appointed place, he would be hailed as a brother by Catiline, Jack Cade, and Cromwell; an ill-assorted trio, it must be allowed, who would have found some difficulty in

* Mrs. Grant of Laggan. She left America in 1786 at the age of thirteen or fourteen; but she was a very precocious child, and grew into a thoughtful woman.

establishing fraternity among themselves. History,—or what in the days before Niebuhr and Mommsen passed for history,—was ransacked for humiliating parallels to the statesmen of the American Revolution.

Imperial Rome from scoundrels rose:
Her grandeur's hailed in verse and prose:
Venice the dregs of sea compose.

So sprung the mighty Congress.
When insects vile emerge to light
They take their short inglorious flight,
Then sink again to native night;
An emblem of the Congress.

The loyalist poets and pamphleteers might have maltreated the politicians with comparative impunity to themselves and their cause if they had left the soldiers alone. Men accustomed to the give and take of controversy fail to recognise what it is for quiet obscure people to have those near and dear to them ridiculed and vilified in print. A farmer's family, with an empty chair reminding them of someone who was digging in the trenches amidst the cannon-balls, or lying three feet below the grass on Bunker's Hill with his face to the daisies, did not see the joke when they read how the American militia were awkward cowardly bumpkins, and their officers scheming upstarts.

With loud peals of laughter your sides, sirs, would crack
To see General Convict, and Colonel Shoe-black,
All strutting the standard of Satan beside,
And honest names using their black deeds to hide.

That was how a Tyrtaeus of the mess-room travestied

the manly unpretending figures of Greene and Thomas, and the antique worth of Heath and Pomeroy. Those must have been far gone in political fanaticism who could detect either truth or humour in such couplets. It may be that, amidst the distractions of the period, the authors of these effusions had not leisure to write better; but it is strange that descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers should have borrowed their controversial weapons from one or another Cavalier libeller in the middle of the seventeenth century. New Englanders, if any people, should have remembered that the reproach of having earned their bread by manual labour or by trade was habitually levelled at Roundheads, and that the sturdy warriors against whom the imputation was directed cared nothing for it; nor, when the battle was joined, was it much consolation to those among the scoffers who had to face them in the field. Seldom, if ever, have two assemblages of men,—divided from each other by four generations, and a thousand leagues,—had so much in common as the army which fought against Charles the First, and the army which followed Washington. Lampoons and pasquinades, on one side of the question or the other, were composed for the amusement of partisans who were prudent enough never to quit their own chimney-corner. But the hymns which comforted the starving shoeless groups around the camp-fires at Valley Forge might have been sung in one of Massey's guard-rooms at Gloucester, or by

a party of troopers returning from the pursuit after Naseby.*

Those sorry scribblers who constituted themselves exponents of loyalist sentiment vulgarised, and possibly exaggerated, the intolerance and the prejudices of their patrons. But caste feeling, intense, aggressive and almost universal, beyond any doubt prevailed in the Tory society of America; and it was terribly and quite disproportionately punished. There are benighted parts of the world where injustice and oppression, in cruel and practical forms, have survived through the ages unassailed and unquestioned; but in a civilised and high-spirited community the far or near future never fails to exact retribution from those who have caught the trick of disdaining and disparaging the mass of their countrymen. When once the British flag had been hauled down from the roof of Province House, Boston would be no place for those who had hitherto walked the streets as favourites of the Government and hereditary tenants of the public offices. The moment had come

* Lessons of war from Him we take
And manly weapons learn to wield.
Strong bows of steel with ease we break,
Forced by our stronger arms to yield.
'Tis God that still supports our right.
His just revenge our foes pursues.
'Tis He that with resistless might
Fierce nations to His power subdues.

The "American Soldier's Hymn," quoted by Professor Tyler in his 31st Chapter.

when they must resign credit, and power, and salary, and all that constituted "the life that late they led," to men whom they disliked, and tried hard to think that they despised. They abandoned their pulpits and counting-houses, their pleasant gardens in the English style, and their mansions shaded with tall poplars; and the land knew them no more by sight or, after awhile, by name. So far as the memory of them even in their own neighbourhood was concerned, it was much if a later generation pointed out their old home as a house which was haunted by Tory ghosts.*

The last days which the loyalists of Massachusetts passed on their native soil were disturbed by the menace of an appalling catastrophe. The artillerymen of the besiegers now had Boston at their mercy; and General Howe allowed a rumour to get abroad that, if his troops were harassed during their embarkation, he should destroy the town. The Selectmen of the municipality sent a flag of truce across the lines, and implored the American Commander-in-Chief, since the garrison was unquestionably on the eve of departure, to take no steps which could afford an excuse for the consummation of so dreadful a threat. From an official point of view there was only one reply to such an appeal. His Excellency (the answer ran) could take no notice of an unauthenticated paper, containing assurances which, if accepted at the American headquarters, did not in any way bind

* Sabine's *Loyalists*: vol. II. page 357.

the British General. But none the less Washington kept his guns silent, and his soldiers within their intrenchments; and the preparations for the removal of the British army went steadily and securely on. It may well be believed that, even in the last extremity, Howe would not have been as bad as his word. It might be argued that a servant of the Crown was under an obligation to carry out his Sovereign's expressed wish, and use "every means of distressing America." To set the city on fire, rather than it should be the seat of Congresses and Committees and a rallying centre for armed insurgents, was presumably within the letter of the Ministerial instructions and most assuredly in strict accordance with their spirit. Boston was only waiting until the red-coats were gone in order to behave quite as rebelliously as Norfolk or Falmouth; but it did not share their fate. In the opinion of Howe enough American towns had been offered as burnt sacrifices upon the altar of personal loyalty. To give the capital of Massachusetts to the flames would excite horror throughout Europe, and most of all among the people who had been his own political associates and familiar friends. He could not stay in America for ever; and, if he returned to London with such a deed on his fame and conscience, however gracious might be his reception at the Palace, he would only need to walk half-way up St. James's Street, and enter Brooks's Club, in order to discover that not one of the men whose respect and goodwill he most valued would ever take his hand again.

Howe, before the war was over, had done some cruel things, and from carelessness or misplaced good-nature had excused still more barbarous conduct in others. But, when he obeyed his better instincts, he was a good-natured English gentleman. Lord Dartmouth, who was something much better than good-natured, had long ago written to desire that, if Boston fell, all should be done to save the friends of the Government from the worst consequences of their fidelity. Howe addressed himself strenuously to the task of mitigating the hard destiny of the fugitives. He had transports barely enough for the conveyance of the army; and it required not a little unselfishness on the part of those responsible for the conduct of the embarkation to find room for the loyalists, their families, and their possessions. In order to provide storage for the effects of those unfortunate civilians, the military left behind and lost much property of their own which they could not pack into the ships and which, it is needless to say, no patriot could just then be found to buy. The exigencies of duty on a front of battle lying within a few hundred yards of an enterprising and elated adversary were unusually heavy and anxious; the soldiers, as the moment of departure approached, were with difficulty restrained from drink and riot; and it is to the honour of the British officers that all the time which could be spared from keeping the besiegers in respect, and preserving discipline in barracks, was devoted to helping those who were more to be pitied than themselves.

The loyalists were by no means in all cases a feeble folk. Many of them knew the water-side of old, and had secured for the transportation of their goods the pick of such labour as there was to be hired. Some of them indeed understood very well how to help themselves, in every acceptance which the words would bear. A certain Crean Brush had been noisy and noticeable among the Tories who remained in Boston during the siege. He was not a native of the city, nor of the colonies. Born in Dublin, he settled himself in New York, and was appointed to official posts which, being before his age, he contrived to make very lucrative. In an unguarded hour Sir William Howe had given him a commission to impound, and to place on board the fleet, all the linen and woollen in the town. Brush, at the head of some violent and dishonest partisans, proceeded to break open stores, shops, and dwelling-houses. Without observing any distinction in the nature of his spoils, he loaded a brigantine with a cargo of stolen property worth a hundred thousand dollars. The example was followed by gangs of seamen from the royal fleet, ill-watched, and sometimes encouraged, by their officers. The soldiers could not always be kept from emulating the sailors; and for some days and nights the city presented frequent scenes of violence and pillage. It was high time to go. Vast quantities of public stores were abandoned to the enemy, after having been damaged as effectually as could be done by people who had begun to count their stay at Boston by half-hours. The British

officers sacrificed all except the most portable of their private baggage. They themselves, huddled up amidst a miserable throng of both sexes and all ages, with top-heavy decks and encumbered gangways, put to sea praying for a quick passage. The scene, according to the historical writer in the "Annual Register," resembled the emigration of a nation rather than the breaking up of a garrison. In Benjamin Hallowell's cabin "there were thirty-seven persons,—men, women, and children; servants, masters, and mistresses; obliged to pig together on the floor, there being no berths." Mr. Hallowell, nine months previously, had been hunted into Boston by a cavalcade of patriots; and this was how he left it. Such are the lesser miseries of a Revolution.

The fleet was bound for Canada, as was reported both in the city and in the American camp; but Washington thought it possible that the British staff had disseminated the story for a blind. He apprehended that the real destination might be New York, and made his dispositions accordingly. But, when the leading ships had finally threaded the islands and gained the open sea, they steered for Halifax in Nova Scotia; a small town on an inhospitable coast, where the passengers, armed and unarmed, would find themselves hardly less crowded and uncomfortable than on board the transports. The reputation of the quarters towards which they were moving was expressed vigorously and compactly throughout the convoy by means of the proverb,

"Hell, Hull, and Halifax."* Some of the royal battle-ships were left behind when their consorts sailed; but the captains did not venture to remain at their moorings within the harbour. The vessels dropped down to Nantasket Road, well out of harm's way, where they continued for another two months, much to the annoyance of the inhabitants of Boston.

That was the only cross in their lot. Every patriot who had remained within the walls was his own man once again; and the patriots in the camp without were impatient to learn how their besieged brethren looked after ten months of hardship and (what to people of their nature was perhaps as trying) of taciturnity and enforced abstinence from public affairs and from commercial business. While Howe's rearguard were pushing off their boats at one extremity of the town, General Putnam, at the head of a thousand men who had had the small-pox, entered it at the other.** Three days afterwards, when it was ascertained that the danger of infection was less than had been feared, the main body of the American army marched through the streets

* It was an old Yorkshire saying, dating from our Civil War, which the British officers applied on the present occasion to the Halifax of Nova Scotia. "A cursed cold wintry place, even yet;" said one of them on the 17th March. "Nothing to eat; less to drink. Bad times, my dear friend. The displeasure I feel from the very small share I have in our present insignificance is so great that I do not know the thing so desperate I would not undertake in order to change our situation."

** Washington to the President of Congress; Cambridge, 19 March, 1776.

amidst cheers and smiles; although it was observed that the faces which filled the windows bore marks of hunger, and of the gloom which had so long oppressed the city.

But joy had returned, and abundance with it; and both the one and the other had come as permanent residents and not as passing guests. On the twenty-second of March a great concourse of people thronged into Boston. They came home by thousands, to find most, but not all, of those whom they had left there; and we are told, though we do not require to be told, that on that day the whole place was in tears and laughter. They were glad once more to roam about their beloved town, their Carthage which, in spite of the Latin quoted at Westminster, after all was not to be destroyed. When they surveyed and reckoned up their losses, they enjoyed the surprise of finding that the waste and wreck of their property was not so extensive as seriously to spoil their pleasure. Hancock's fine well-decorated mansion seemed very slightly the worse for a hostile occupation. "The town," Washington wrote to him, "although it has suffered greatly, is not in so bad a state as I expected to find it; and I have a particular pleasure in being able to inform you, Sir, that your house has received no damage worth mentioning. Your furniture is in tolerable order, and the family pictures are all left entire and untouched." When the President of Congress came off so easily, it may be believed that little was missing out of habitations which presented

fewer temptations to the marauder, and whose owners exercised less prominent and invidious functions. Even those ancient wooden dwellings which had been pulled down for fuel were pronounced to be well away for reasons connected with the future health and beauty of the town. A visit prompted by eager curiosity, and attended by well-founded satisfaction, was that which was paid to the British fortifications.* Soldiers, and yet more the parents and wives of soldiers, gazed with shuddering thankfulness on those formidable works which it had cost so much labour to erect, and so little bloodshed to capture. Doctor John Warren, who had repaired to the spot where he could stand as close to his brother as was now possible for him, has left a description of the fortress which Howe's engineers had erected on the peninsula of Charlestown. "When I came," he wrote, "to Bunker's Hill I found it exceedingly strong; the front parapet about thirteen feet high, composed of earth contained in plank supported by

* "March 17. This morning about Nine a'clock there was A Larem and our people went into the boats for go to Boston. General Sullivan With a party of men Went to Bunker Hill and took posesien of it.

"This afternoon I went Down to charlestown neck in order to go over to Bunker hill. But the Sentinals Stopt me.

"March 18. This morning I went to Bunker Hill and Charles-town For to see the Ruens of the Town.

"March 25. I cooked this day. I have ben up bacon Hill this day."

And so at last David How got into Boston, and saw the view from Beacon Hill on the North of the Common,—the site where the State-House now stands.

huge timber." The same care and skill had been bestowed wherever they were required; and Washington reported that every avenue to Boston had been fortified in such a manner that the town was almost impregnable. And yet,—by dint of endurance, and self-control, and rigid reticence, followed by strong decision and sudden action when the proper moment came,—he had made that stronghold his own at an expenditure of less than a score of New England lives.

The prizes which fell into the hands of the victors were well worth securing. Great numbers of fine cannon lay about in the batteries. They had been spiked, and otherwise mutilated; but their repair was within the resources of an army containing excellent blacksmiths, among the best of whom was Nathaniel Greene, the second best of the generals. There were huge piles of shot and shells, and a great quantity of miscellaneous stores. Washington's quartermaster-general estimated the contents of the magazines at something between twenty-five and thirty thousand pounds in value.* But all that the Americans found on land was insignificant as compared with what they captured at sea. Even while the men-of-war lingered in Nantasket Road an armed schooner hailing from Marblehead had already picked up a store-ship from Cork, which carried fifteen hundred barrels of powder in her hold. After the lapse of two months, in consequence of a hostile demonstration by the Continental army assisted by provincial militia, the

* Washington to the President of Congress; March 19, 1776.

royal squadron took its departure from the scene. An imaginative population, on the look-out for anniversaries, pleased itself by remembering that, according to the provisions of the Act devised by the British Ministry for the ruin of Boston, the fourteenth of June 1774 had been the latest date for trading vessels to leave or enter the condemned harbour. And now the fourteenth of June 1776 was the last day on which the last of the Ministerial war-ships was seen in Boston waters. Then began an uninterrupted harvest for the colonial privateers. They made an easy prey of the crazy merchantmen which, as a substitute for swift frigates, were bringing the reinforcements for Howe's army. When these belated and ill-adapted vessels at length reached the coast of Massachusetts, the royal fleet had gone for good, and the whole bay between headland and headland was alive with American cruisers. Four transports were captured; and the Highland soldiers on board at last reached their destination, but reached it as prisoners of war.* The patriots learned with a satisfaction which few will grudge them that the brigantine chartered by Crean Brush was taken, with himself and

* "June 16. This morning our Privitesters Spy a large Brig Bound from Scotland to Boston and they chased Them all Day and at Night they had a Smart fight and took them.

"June 17. This day the Prisoners Ware brought to Boston. There being upwards of 200 Hilanders besides other valuable loading:

"June 19. This morning our Priviteteres took a Ship. She had on board 112 Hilanders with a Cutermments all fixed for war." *David How's Diary* for 1776.

all his booty on board of her. From that time forward his life was one series of misfortunes, until it came to a bad end.

In their relief and exultation the inhabitants of the rescued city were not heedless of the dangers which the future might have in store for them. As soon as the royal sails were over the horizon, Boston began to take precautions against the possible contingency of their reappearance. The British, on the eve of their retirement, had demolished those works on Castle Island which commanded the main entrance to the harbour; and the municipal authorities now applied themselves vigorously and expeditiously to the task of restoring the ramparts. Every able-bodied townsman gave two days a week of voluntary labour,* working as Themistocles, at a famous crisis, made the Athenians work on the Long Walls which led from their city to the Piræus. Boston, (to use a good old military term,) was soon safe from insult. A hostile squadron, whose commander was not prepared to sacrifice some of his masts and a large proportion of his crews, could not thenceforward penetrate except in a thick fog, and even then only with much better pilots than the class of New England mariners who would consent to hire out their services for such a purpose. No admiral,—and least of all one of those political admirals whom Sandwich was in the habit of appointing,—would feel comfortable when he opened a sealed

* *Travels through the Interior Parts of America, in a Series of Letters by an Officer.* London, 1791. Letter XLVIII.

order directing him to place his ships within cannon-shot of the wharves of Boston.

Making reference to the proceedings of the English Ministry Frederic of Prussia, as was not unusual with him, employed the language of a book which he loved better to quote than to read. "When I reflect," he said, "on the conduct of that government in the war with their colonies I am almost tempted to say what the theologians maintain with regard to Providence, that their ways are not ours." And indeed they were not. North and Sandwich resembled Frederic as war-ministers even less than Gage resembled him as a general, or George the Third as a monarch. Bunker's Hill had been a soldier's battle; but the responsibility for the campaign of which it formed an episode lay with the placemen and their Royal master. They had contrived among them to bring about the discomfiture of a valiant army, responsive to discipline, and containing more than a due proportion of distinguished or promising officers. They had involved it in almost every calamity which could befall a military force, except disgrace. They had so managed matters that, in a region overflowing with plenty, their troops had been fed from Leadenhall Market, as an orator of the Opposition cleverly and not untruly put it.* Burke was reported to have said that, though two hundred pounds a man had been spent on salt beef and sour crout, our garrison could not have

* The phrase was Lord Effingham's. *Parliamentary History*: vol. VIII. page 1350.

remained ten days longer in Boston unless the heavens had rained down quails and manna. And yet, much as the English had suffered during the course of the siege from the scarcity and badness of their food, in the last resort they were refused the comparative satisfaction of having yielded to famine, and not to force. The Government deprived Howe of two thousand infantry, at the moment when he most needed to be strong. The reinforcements which were sent from home to fill the void arrived two months too late; and so it came to pass that the ill-used General was in the end not starved but manœuvred out of his positions. The acts of aggressive warfare sanctioned or condoned by the Ministers were as futile as their defensive arrangements, and had consequences most disastrous to the national interests. They had not occupied a single square furlong of soil, fortified or open, in any of the colonies; but they had shelled three towns, had sent into the Gazette a score of loyal merchants, and had rendered a few hundred families homeless. They had alienated all the neutral opinion in America, and had lighted a flame of resentment against Great Britain which they continued to feed with fresh fuel until it grew so hot that it did not burn itself out for a couple of lifetimes.

England had never reaped so little glory or advantage from so great an expenditure of money, and after so much preliminary swagger on the part, not of the people who were to pay or the soldiers who were to fight, but of the statesmen who had already begun to blunder,

Colonel Barré, in a speech rich with traditional knowledge and personal observation of war, declared that this unsuccessful effort to keep our ground in one small corner of our own empire had cost the Treasury half as much again as the operations of the year 1704, in which our armies were conquering all over Europe from Blenheim to Gibraltar. Barré, however, had not occasion to go outside the memory of the youngest of his audience. No long interval had elapsed since Warburg and Plassey,—since the defeat of Montcalm, the conquest of Havanna, and Hawke's victory off the coast of Brittany. But during that interval a process had been going forward the effects of which were now manifest. George the Third had at length accomplished his purpose. He had rooted out frankness, courage, and independence from the councils of the State; but he had pulled up along with them other qualities which his policy, when brought to a trial, could not afford to dispense with. His Cabinet was now exclusively composed of men willing to pursue ends which he dictated, but incapable of discerning, or rightly directing, the means by which alone those ends could be attained.

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